

Teaching Portfolio

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Visual Designer | Educator

Fall 2025

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Contents

Introduction	01
GD 101: Design Foundation Fall 2024	02
The Power of One Letter	03
• Student 1	04
• Student 2	11
Pop-Up Principles	23
• Student 1	24
• Student 2	30
GD 201: Typography 1 Fall 2024	35
Expanding Design Canons	36
• Student 1	37
Festival Branding	61
• Student 1	62

Introduction

Shaping Culture Through Design

Teaching, for me, always starts with remembering what it feels like to be a student, carrying doubts, deadlines, and pressures that aren't always visible on the surface. I try to build a classroom where students feel **supported**, where they know **their voices matter**, and where empathy is as important as skill. My approach balances **technical training with curiosity and exploration**, encouraging students to refine their craft while also connecting their identities and lived experiences to design.

I adapt assignments, critiques, and tools so that students with different strengths and backgrounds can contribute in ways that feel both challenging and accessible.

I see design as more than making, it's a **way of asking questions, shaping culture, and giving form to voices** that might otherwise go unheard. In my classes, I invite students to look beyond design itself and draw from art, film, literature, and their own lives to expand how they see the world. My hope is that they leave not only with stronger design skills, but with confidence in their own perspective and the belief that their work can create connection, empathy, and change.



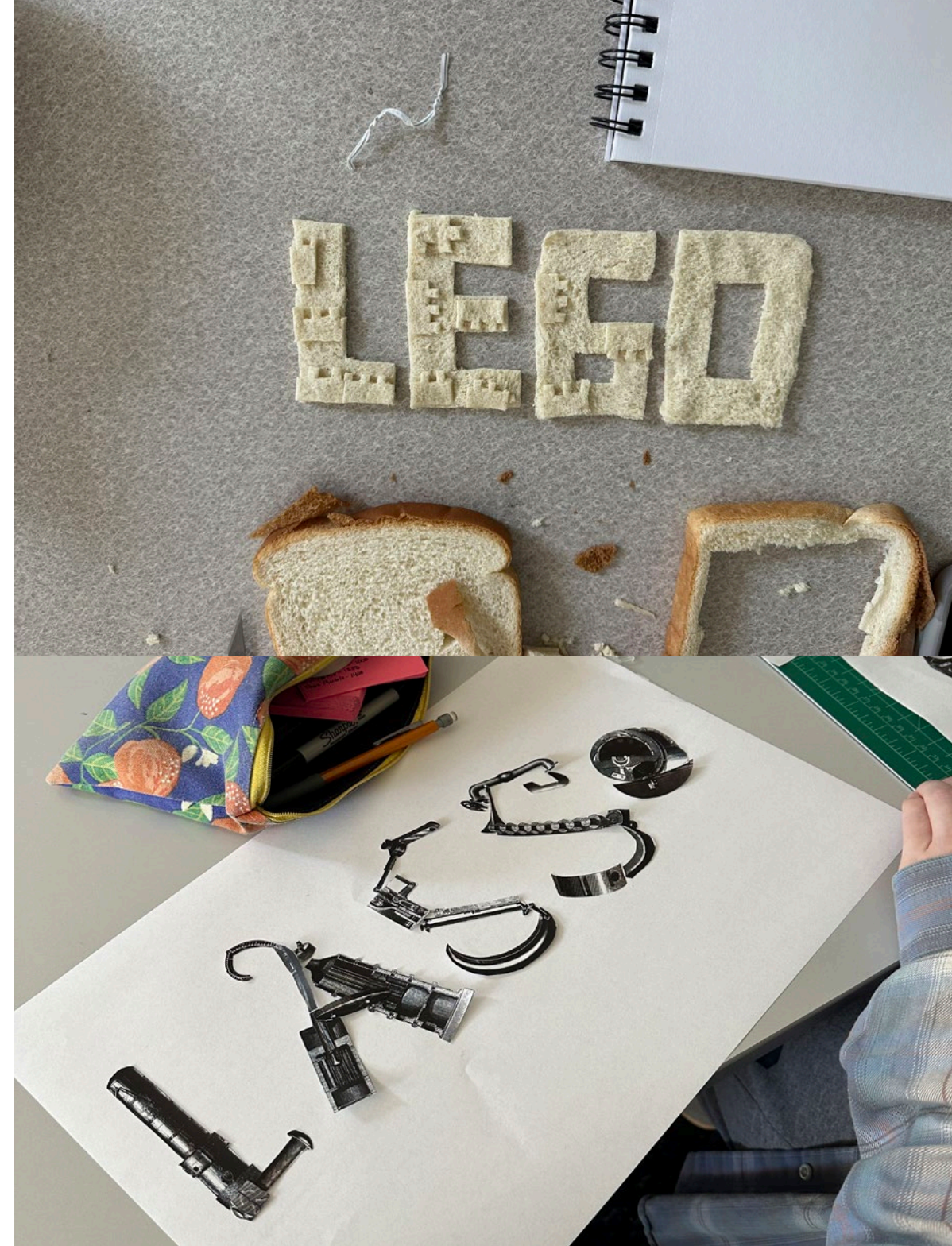
GD 101: Design Foundation | Fall 2024

Co-taught with tenure-track faculty Brooke Hull (bxh5541@psu.edu)

Design Foundation is an introductory studio course that helps students build a strong grounding in design principles, methods, and visual communication.

The class focuses on developing ideas, experimenting with materials, and using the elements and principles of design to communicate clearly and effectively. Projects move from abstraction to poster design, icon development, and portfolio preparation, giving students a broad foundation in both concept and craft.

This course was **highly feedback-driven** and **centered on process**. Students presented work in critiques almost every class session, practicing how to explain their choices, respond to feedback, and refine their projects over multiple iterations. Emphasis was placed on experimentation, risk-taking, and learning through making, with process work weighed just as heavily as final outcomes. By the end of the semester, students not only built a portfolio of work but also developed confidence in their ability to engage in a design process rooted in curiosity, reflection, and dialogue.



The Power of Letter

Co-taught with tenure-track faculty Brooke Hull (bxh5541@psu.edu)

In this assignment, students designed two posters, each built around a **single letter** from **their own initials**. Each poster communicated a chosen word that began with that letter, transforming the letterform into a visual metaphor for the word's meaning. The challenge was to move beyond typography as static form and instead use scale, composition, and manipulation of the letter itself to express concept and emotion.

The project emphasized process over product. Students began with **list-making, brainstorming, timed writing, and extensive mind mapping** before moving into sketches and iterations. Throughout, critiques and feedback sessions were central, helping students refine both concept and craft. By the end, the posters reflected not only typographic experimentation but also the ability to translate abstract ideas into clear and impactful visual communication.

Project 2- Initials Composition Based off a Word

The objective for this project was to create two posters that effectively communicate a word of my choosing starting with the same letters as my initials. I was required to use only one letter per poster and some representational imagery to emphasise the word I chose. The goal was to design a poster where the topics are immediately discernable to a complete stranger.

Brainstorming Words

Project 2 Initial List Making		
E		
Love	Hate	Learn More
1. Eye		Earlwoes
2. Earrings	Experiments	Economics
3. Elders	Emotion	Editing
4. Earth	Earwax	Equinox
5. Eat	Earthworms	Epic
6. Educate	eels	Elks
7. Environment	Elevators	Encasing
8. Elephant	envelops	Energy
9. Eggplant	equality	evicting
10. Egg	exposure	exercising
	expresso	
C		
1. cafe	cats	clocks
2. coffee	calories	comment
3. color	cry	clone
4. cow	cave	cune
5. cute	careless	coupon
6. cheerful	creaky	characters
7. classy	cynical	circle
8. chandelier	cough	chicks
9. calm	comfortable	colours
10. champagne	catnip	cookies
	church	cigarettes
	cowboy	

The first step in this assignment was to brainstorm words starting with the same letter as my initials. My initials are E, E, C, so naturally I chose “E” and “C” as my letters. My professors gave me three categories to find words in: things I love, things I hate, things I want to learn more about. I was allowed a limited amount of time on each letter. I used my own knowledge along with the internet to help me choose thirty words, ten for each category. Once the time was up, I moved onto my second word and did the same. I found it challenging to find words for things I want to learn about, so I wrote down words I was unfamiliar with. After I had sixty words total, I was assigned to choose three words from each letter that I liked most. From there, I met with my peers to help me decide my final two words, champagne and earth.

Timed Writting Activity

Champagne

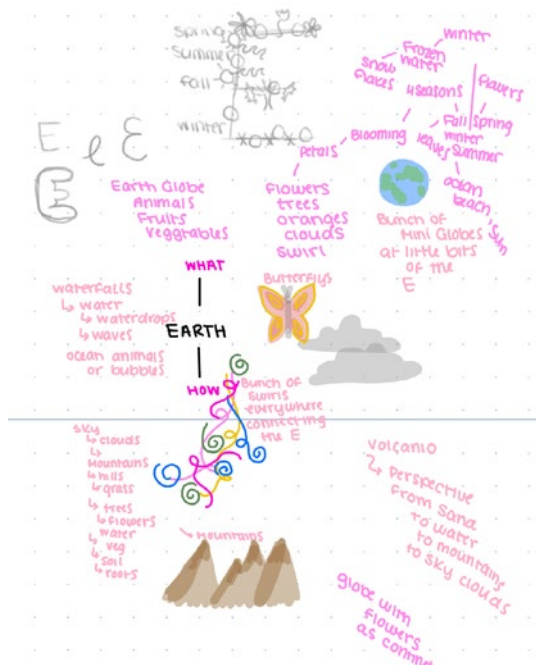
Glasses. Liquid pouring. Bottles. Bubbles. Crystals. Pink. Yellow. Sparkles. Confetti, glasses crossing over each other. Tipped glass pouring champagne in a c motion. Large bottle popping. Spraying everywhere. Labels. Green. Metallic. Gold. Cheers. New year's. Graduations. Celebrations. Cork. Sparkling. Liquid. Ice. Drinking. Dinner. Wedding

Earth

All things environments. Little globes. Water. Grass. Land. Animals. Waterfall. Flowers. Elephants. Rocks. Colors. Trees. Countries. Different fount types for the E. people. Sky. Clouds. Bunch of little things combined. Fruits. Vegetables. Farms. Circle. White. Blue. Green. Leaves. Space. Solar system. Stars. Sun. moon. Layers...

After my two words were chosen, I was assigned to a timed writing activity. I had a certain amount of time to write down anything that came to my mind when I thought of the words “champagne” and “Earth”. This activity was rather challenging for me because I am a visual learned and worker. I tried to let my mind wonder but struggled to form my thoughts into words.

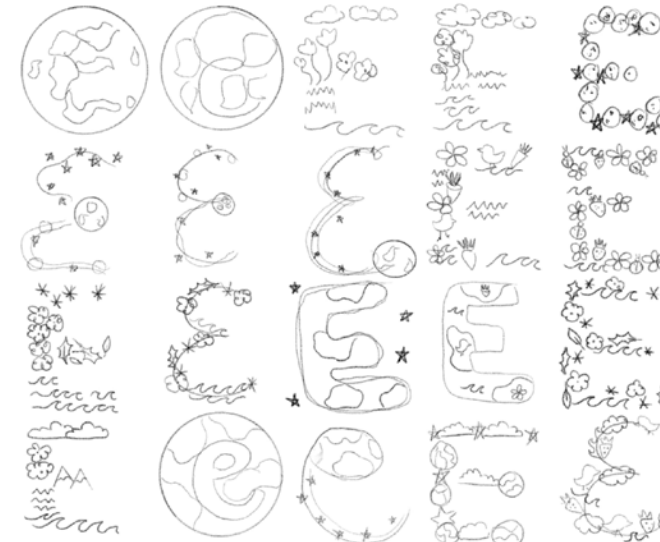
Mind Maps



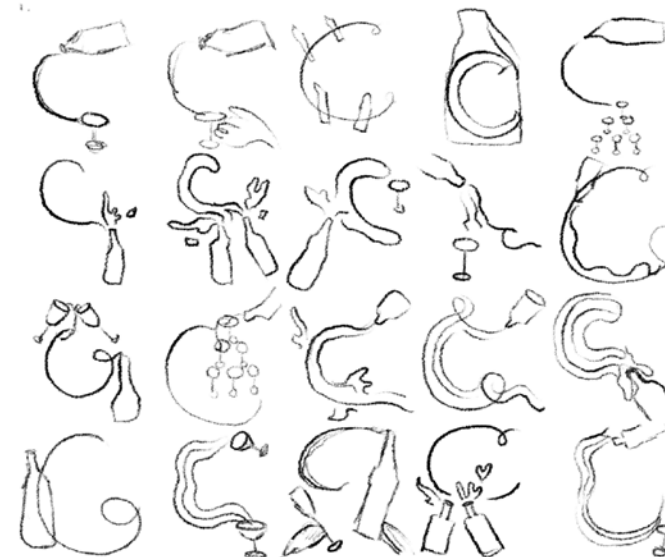
I created mind maps for both of my words. I let my creativity take control and pushed every thought into a new direction. I enjoyed this activity more than the writing because I was able to sketch and doodle different ideas. I started to struggle with the concept of earth because it is so broad. There were so many different directions I could have taken my mind map, yet I got stuck because I was over-

Thumbnail Sketches

I made twenty thumbnail sketches for each word, earth and champagne.



Earth was a challenge to sketch out. I could not decide what direction I wanted to go into, the obvious direction of using the globe as the focal point or using different elements of the earth to construct an "E". I ended up doing both for this part of the process.



Champagne was easy for me. I had ideas from my mind map that I pushed to become more complex, and others that I simplified. I knew I wanted to incorporate liquid and a bottle, I just had to figure out how.

Refined Sketches



After getting feedback from my professors, I was advised to keep my champagne composition simple, bottles and liquid shaping the letter “C”. I took two of my favorite thumbnail sketches and made my refined sketches.



The feedback for my earth poster was complex because I had two directions I was heading in and didn’t know which path to choose. I was advised to make a refined sketch for each direction and go from there.

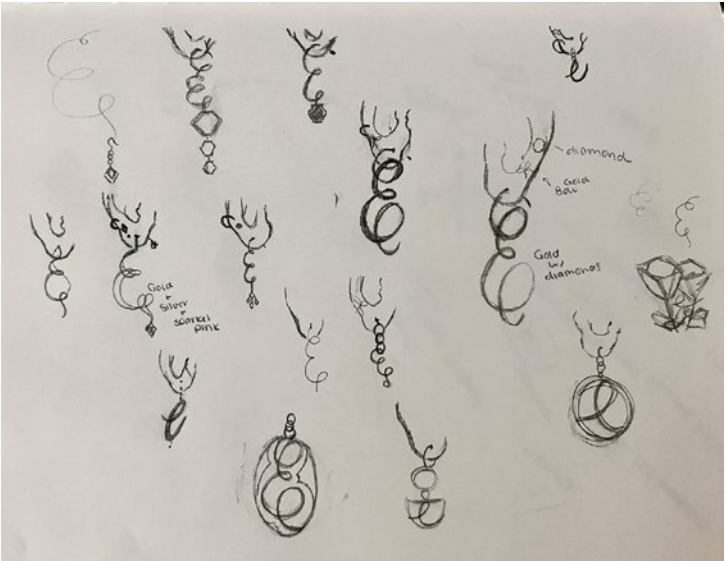


Back to the Drawing Board

Senior students and extra professors visited my class to give feedback. I discussed with them my struggles with the word “Earth”. They suggested to talk with my professors about changing my word because I have pushed “earth” in so many directions and still could not create something I was happy with.

I talked with my professors and decided it would be best to change my word. I went back to the list I made of thirty words and chose “earring”. I felt like I could create a successful composition using the “e” as the earring, so I started sketching. I started sketching thumbnail sketches and landed with two favorite sketches.

Project 2 Initial List Making		
E		
Love	Have	Learn More
1. Eye		Earlobes
2. Earrings	Experiments	Economics
3. Elders	Emotion	Editing
4. Earth	Earwax	Equinox
5. Eat	Earthworms	Epic
6. Educate	Eggs	Elks
7. Environment	Elevators	Encasing
8. Elephant	envelops	Energy
9. Eggplant	equality	evicting
10. Egg	exposure	exercising
expresso		
C		
1. cafe	cats	clocks
2. coffee	colorless	convent
3. color	cry	clone
4. cow	cave	cure
5. cuts	careless	coupon
6. cheerful	creaky	characters
7. classy	cubical	circle
8. chandelier	cough	chicks
9. calm	comfortable	cobwebs
10. champagne	catnip	cookies
church		
cigarettes		
cowboy		



Mood Boards

Before I made my final sketches, I made mood boards on Adobe Illustrator for each poster.

When I thought of earring, I went for golds, pinks, and an elegant vibe.



When I thought of champagne, I went for dark greens, the color of champagne, the liquid champagne, and sparkles. I also wanted to incorporate different liquid flows to I could reference it when drawing my final sketch.



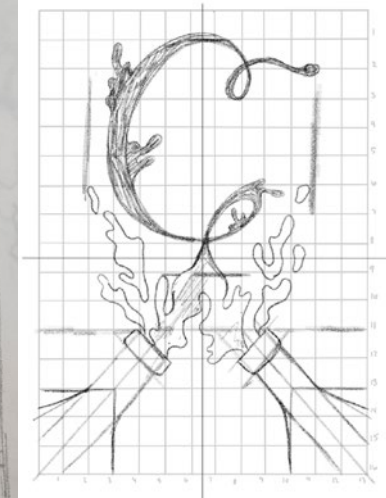
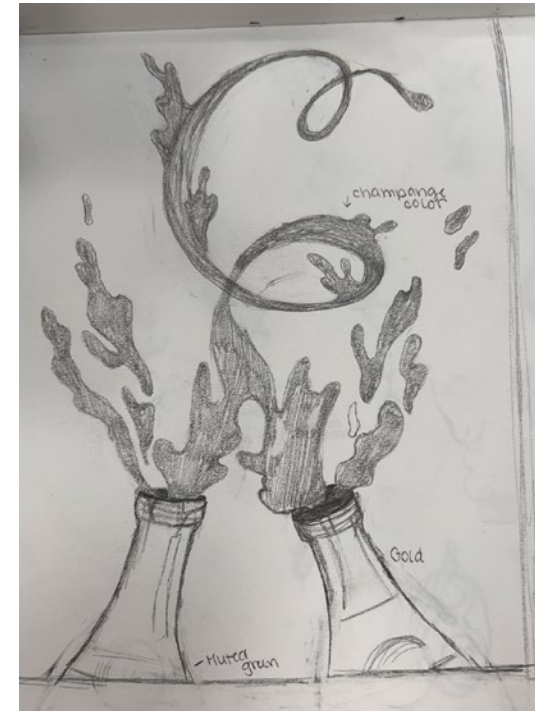
New Refined Sketches

Looking at my mood boards, I did one more rough sketch of my two favorite ideas for my letter “e” and my favorite idea from my “C”.

I was stuck between using a capital “E” or a lower case “e”. I talked with the seniors, and we decided the lowercase would work best.



I revised my champagne sketch after getting feedback from the seniors and professors. I was advised to make the "C" more of the focus by "zooming in" and making only the tops of the bottles visible on the poster. I love the idea, so I sketched it out and added splashing coming out of each bottle.

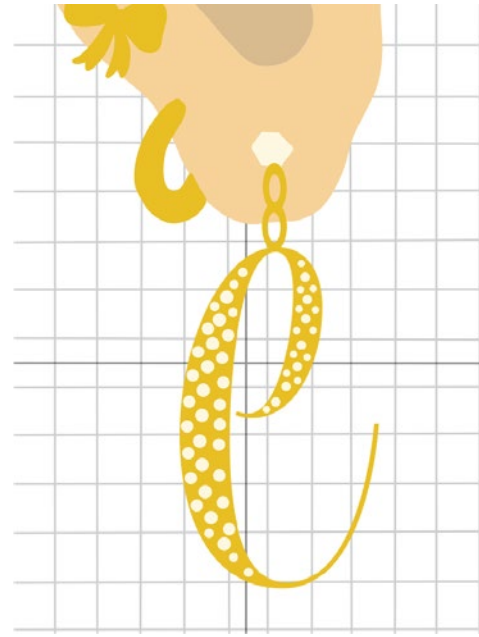


Final Sketches

I created my final sketches on Adobe Fresco using a 13x16 grid so it would translate well to the 13"x16" poster I would be making.



Final Sketch for Champagne



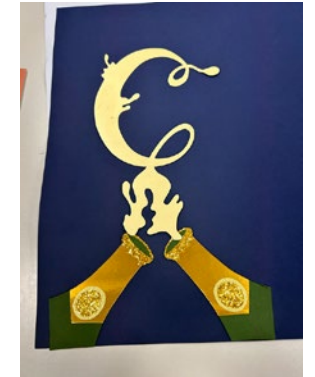
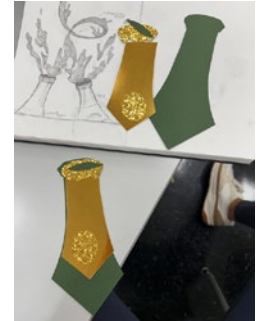
Final Sketch for Earring

Crafting "C"

Crafting my champagne posed we fun, but tedious. The curves were difficult, but I managed to make them all looked the way I envisioned.

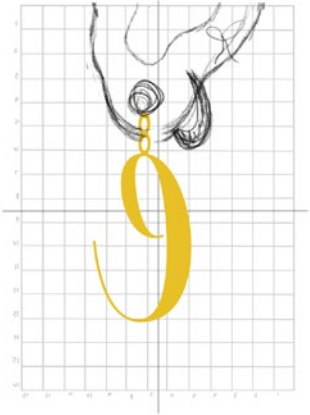


Reversed image for crafting

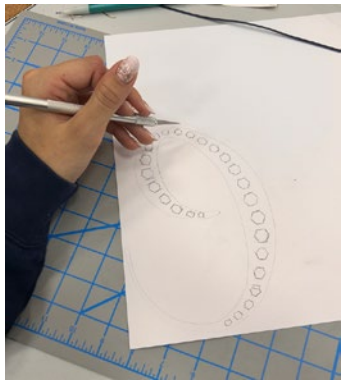


Crafting “E”

Crafting my earring poster was challenging. The ear, “e” and smaller earrings were easy, but the diamonds on the “e” were difficult to craft because of the measurements and scale.



Reversed sketch image for crafting reference



Initial Crafted Posters Submitted for Critique

These are my initial crafted posters I submitted for critique.



“C” for Champagne Poster



“e” for Earring Poster

Final Mounted Posters



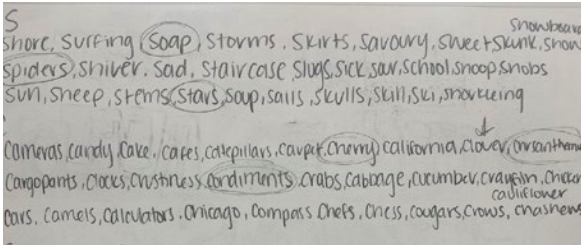
Final Poster for “e”

Final Poster for “c”

Student 2

Project 2 - Posters

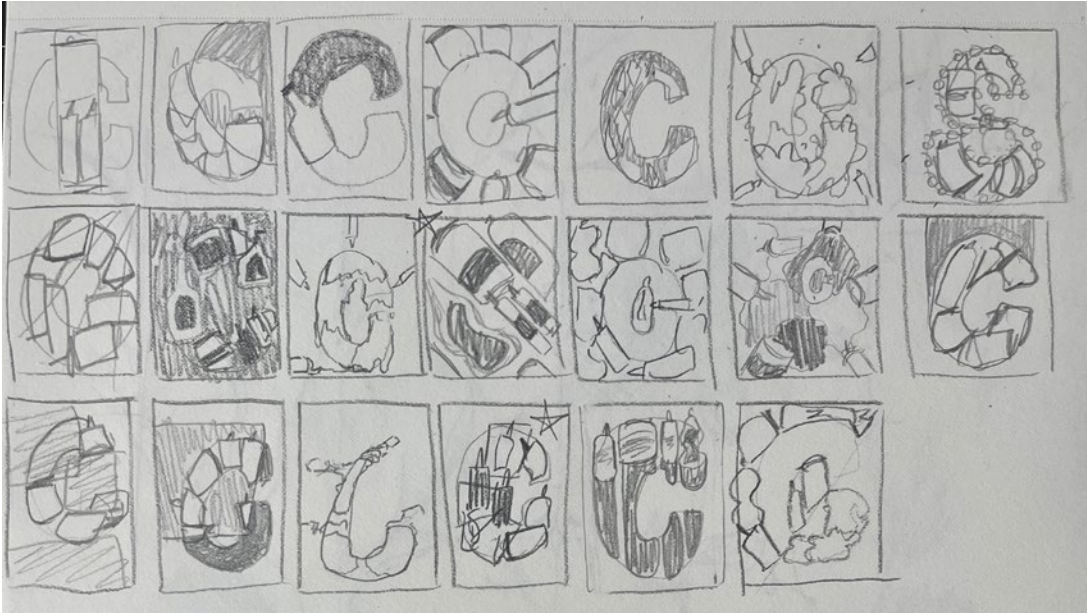
In this project, we were to create two posters communicating a word of our choice. Each poster would use one of our initials to portray a word beginning with the same letter. Our objectives were to utilize design principles, composition, and metaphorical imagery to reconfigure the letter into a form that works to portray our word of choice through precise and creative craft improving our necessary design and technical skills.



List Making Ideation Activity

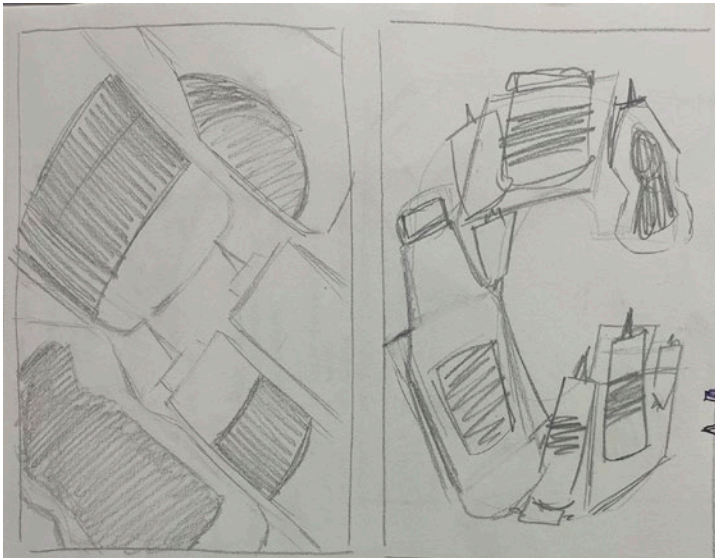
The two words I picked out of the 60 different ideas I had, I landed with 'C' for condiments and 'S' for soap. Condiments stood out over my other choices because I hate condiments. The idea of them and seeing them in real life disgust me. I picked condiments so I could work with something I am not usually comfortable with in order to push myself and see how I would work with something I would otherwise hate. This design will be focused on first.

Soap became my final decision because it was a last minute addition to my list of words, yet stood out to me due to how boring it can be. I wanted to take something more mundane and forgotten about and turn it into a design that is exciting and engaging to the viewer.



Initial 20 Sketches for Condiment Poster

The main idea of all my designs were different layouts of the condiment bottles. While I enjoyed coming up with new ideas and experimenting with the different possibilities condiments has design wise, for the most part I had in mind my top two designs I wanted to go further with. The top 2 designs are labeled with stars.



Initial Condiment Sketch Ideas

Shown above are 4 different sketch ideas I had for this poster.

The first one shows an aerial view of different condiment bottles, and their labels making the shape of a 'C'. This design didn't make it far as in wanting the bottles to look both realistic and to be to scale, the labels wouldn't line up well enough for the viewer to see a 'C' shape without really having to look for it.

The second design was one I had originally thought of for this poster and was convinced at the time was going to be the final design. After getting feedback from multiple peers, the plain design in having the condiment bottles and different filler shapes in the background make up the shape of a 'C' was deemed boring and not interesting enough for both myself and others.



The third one was 5 different condiment bottles lining the top of the 'C' shape, and the melting idea from the mood board making up the rest of the 'C'. This design had the bottles melt going straight down, and some of them would have a slight curve to make up the 'C'. This design I later revamped to be more visually interesting as I found the straight cut lines coming from the bottle felt very static and did not represent the more funky vibe I wanted for the condiments.



This sketch was a more dynamic version of the third initial sketch I made that had more curves and continued off the page in a different way. This design stood out to me over the rest initially and I decided to create it digitally to play with the colors.

Digital Refined Sketch

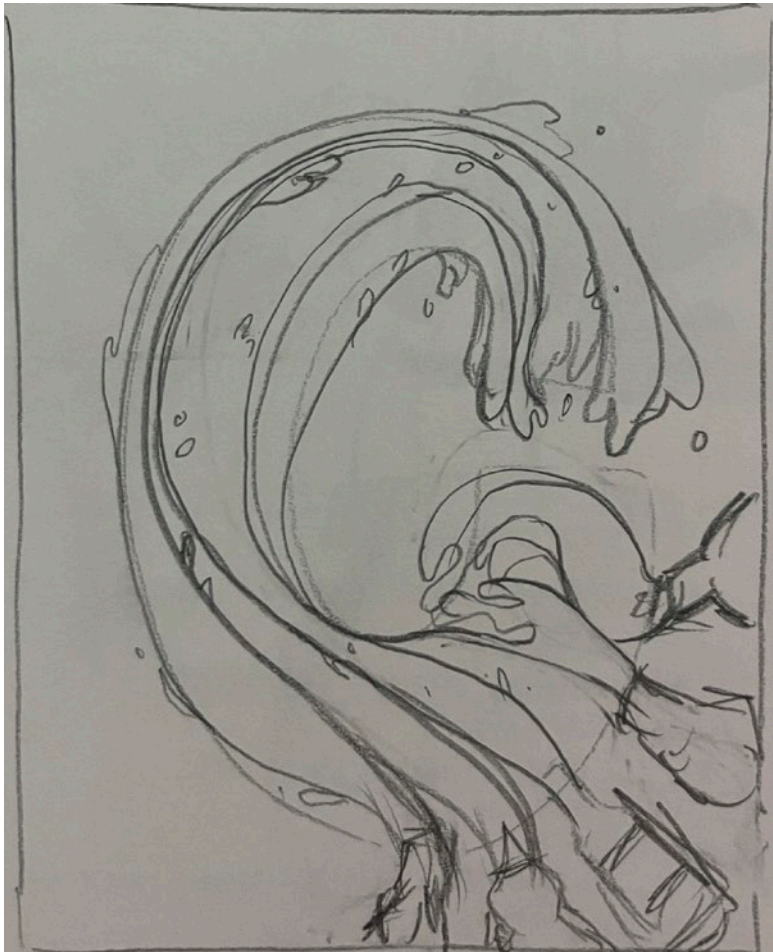


I recreated the last refined sketch on photoshop to play with the design and the colors. The refined sketch on paper had looked very appealing to me and had stood out to me at this time in being the final design I would go with. Even so, after creating it digitally, I found it still appeared very boring to me and seemed to be missing something but I couldn't figure out what that something was. I decided to scrap this idea yet again and start over.

Final Refined Sketch

After receiving feedback on the digital refined sketch and the other 3 sketches I had made previously, I was given the idea to experiment with the bottles being on the bottom of the 'C' rather than the top and the condiment substances themselves being the thing to make up the 'C' shape rather than just the bottles.

The sketch showed 5 different condiment bottles seemingly squirting out the different condiments that were in them, having them go up and make a 'C' shape. Small amounts and droplets of each condiment would overlap with one another as well, blending them together.



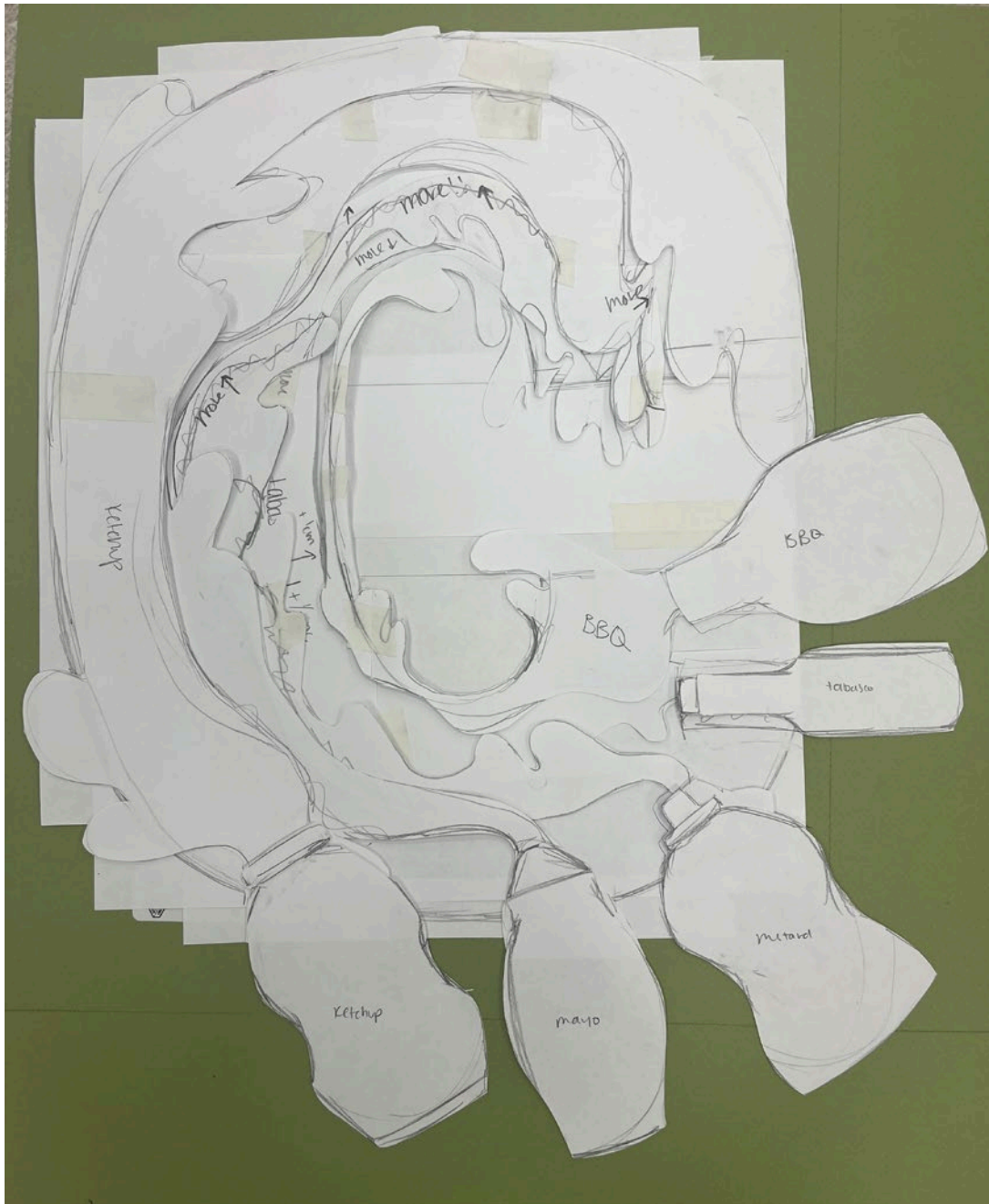
Final Digital Refined Sketch

Shown here is the digital sketch I created of the last refined sketch. I wanted to play with the colors and positioning of the bottles and the liquids. This helped me decide on the final color for the background as well as I was struggling to decide on a color that would work when looking at my other sketches.

I decided to have the condiments layered on top of one another starting with being the furthest back and smallest in the middle of the 'C', the BBQ, to being the largest and closest to the viewer on the outside of the 'C', the ketchup. The design of the bottles was still a struggle for me at this stage as I couldn't decide if I wanted to do labels yet or leave them plain. I finally decided once I started to craft my final.



I kept the idea of having a small amount of each condiment on top of the other condiments to have more detail overall in the piece. The thickness of each condiment shape and how much detail each part would have was also explored here. I got feedback on this portion and decided having varying thickness between each condiment would help in defining them and making them more realistic.



Final Rough Draft Design

After the creation of my final design digitally, I felt confident enough in my design choice to start crafting my final design.

I initially created a large 'C' that would fit to scale with the final poster size by taping together different pieces of paper and measuring how much extra space would be left above and to the sides of the 'C' on the final. I then individually cut out the different condiment bottles and laid them out where they would go at the bottom of the poster. I had thought to have the bottles be smaller so they could fit on the poster entirely, but in the end I kept them going off the page as keeping them on felt too trapped. I left the whole bottle cut out both in the draft design and in the final so I could later cut them off once they were glued rather than crafting and cutting them and then possibly running into the issue of them being the wrong size or cut at a bad angle.

I taped three pieces of printer paper together and traced out where the ketchup path would be. I continued to do this for the rest of the condiments as well on different pieces of paper before I cut them all out to make sure they fit correctly and there wouldn't be any empty space behind them. This allowed me to experiment with how big I wanted some of the paths or how small and how many curves and bumps could realistically fit in the cut out before it became too excessive.

The mustard path and the hot sauce path I found out to have been cut too small after I laid out all the pieces on top of one another. I made a note to myself that for the final those pieces would be slightly bigger along with the rest of the pieces in general to ensure they wouldn't be too small in the end and I would have to go through the struggle of cutting them out again.

Initial Condiment Poster Crafting



Pictured is the initial poster design before critique.

Each condiment bottle and path was directly traced from the template I made previously out of printer paper. This allowed for a seamless design and a lack of pencil marks on the final as I was able to layout everything straight from the template and did not have to mark up the final.

The hardest part I found was gluing down each condiment path as I had to work from the back to the front and was unable to do them all at once. This made it so each one had to be laid perfectly or the rest of them would lay crooked or leave empty space that was not supposed to be there behind them. I used tape and some pencil markings to aid in this process and ensure each piece was where it needed to be.

For the bottle designs I decided to go with a simplified version of the most popular brand logos for each condiment in order to make them recognisable without the need of words.

With the written and oral critique of this poster, I was able to see my design from an outsider's point of view. The craftsmanship of my poster was complimented and the process it took to get there as I pointed out the template I had made previous to the final. The recognizability of the bottles was easy for the viewer to notice as well, as the simplicity allowed them to figure out what brand each bottle was representing easily.

The BBQ path had stood out in the critiques as well, as originally the straightness was commented on seeming out of place amongst the rest of the more organic and curvy shapes, but in the end seemed to work as it helped in creating the 'C' shape be clearer.

The path of the hot sauce was commented on and how it should be in front of the BBQ path in order to follow the path I had been following throughout the rest of the piece. The fine details on the ketchup lid needed to be fixed as well as it looked poorly crafted among the rest of the well crafted bottles. The small amount of mustard peeking behind the mayo also needed to be cut out. The biggest thing was the BBQ path in the center of the 'C' that I was told made the letter look like a 'G' in how it curves into the shape and looks out of place. I cut this piece out completely for the final.



Close Up of Stain

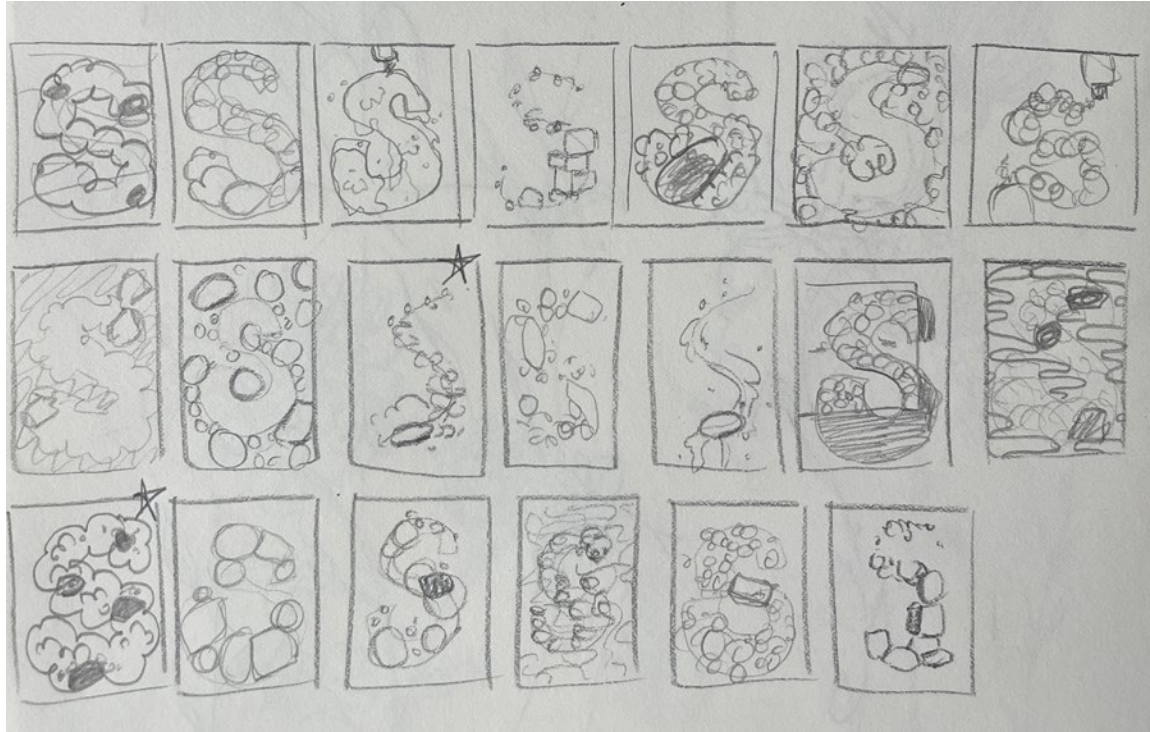
The cut out part from the BBQ sauce left a stain on the background paper. I later fixed it by cutting out the entire center part of the poster and replacing it with a spare piece of blue paper glued onto the back.

Mounted Condiment Poster

Pictured is my final poster. The parts of the bottles that were hanging off the poster were removed as they proved to add nothing to the poster by leaving them on, which I initially debated doing. The removal of the BBQ path in the center of the poster aided in making the shape more clear to the viewer and the fine adjustments made helped bring the poster to an end.

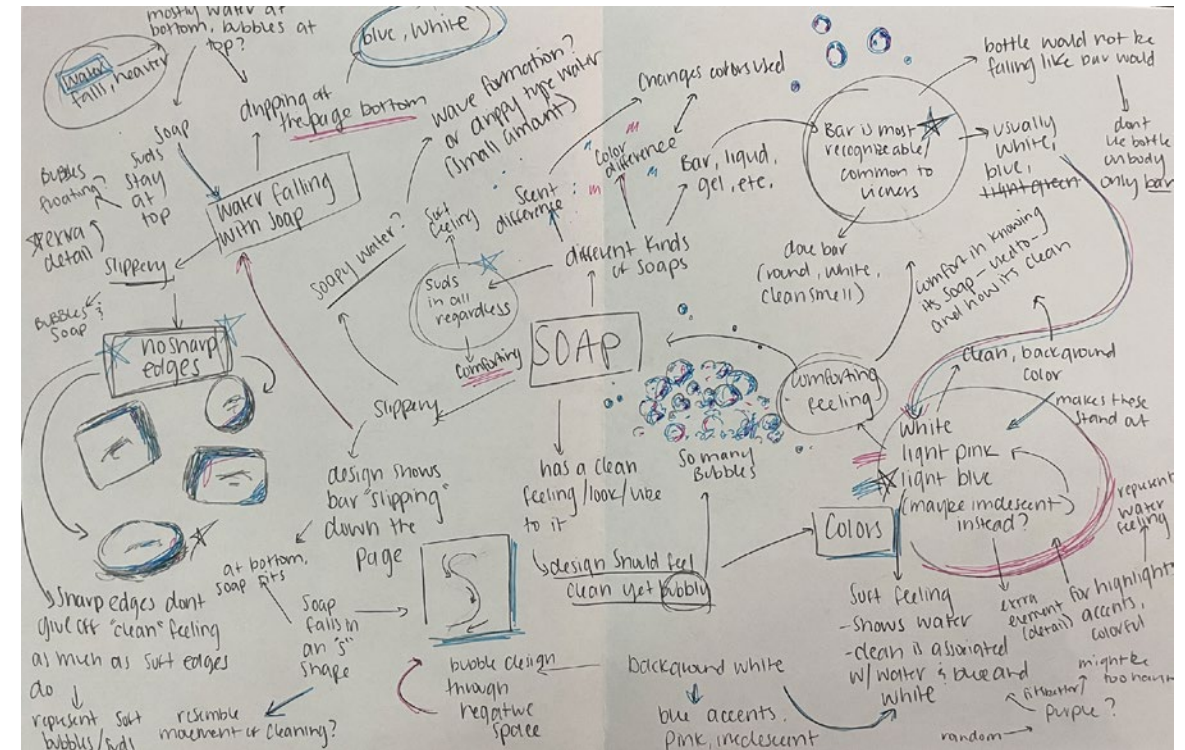


Initial 20 Sketches for Soap Poster



The first idea I had when creating 20 sketches was a soap bar falling in the shape of an 'S', leaving a trail of bubbles behind it that form the 'S' shape. The other ideas were different forms of soap or even soap bars stacked on top of one another or bubbles making up the 'S'. My main idea for all of them was a soap bar included somewhere in the design, as a bar to me is more noticeable as soap than a liquid gel or a bottle of soap is. The two designs I decided to push further were labeled with stars.

Soap Mind Map



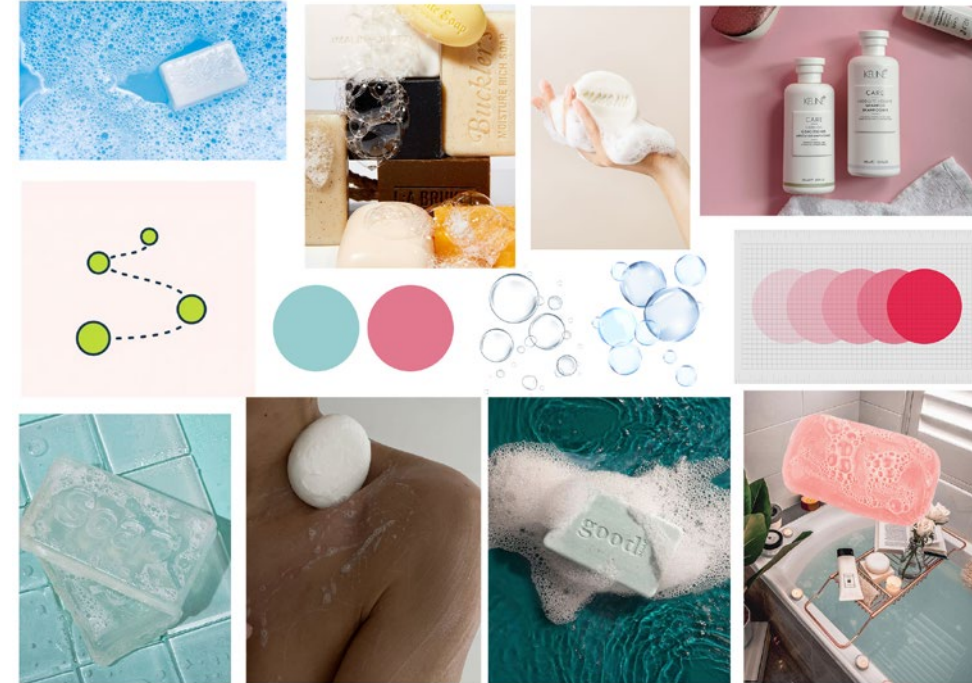
The soap mind map focused on having a softer feeling and a more clean look to it to parallel that feeling of soap. The colors I planned to use were softer colors and those in the pink, green, and blue families. The design plan I focused on was to have the soap falling towards the bottom of the page in the shape of an S to show as if it slipped out of someone's hand. Bubbles would be present throughout the entire design and would surround the soap the most at the bottom where it sits.

Soap Mood Board

Pictured to the right is the mood board I created for my soap poster.

I included different soap bar designs and shapes to provide a variety and compare options for my final. The rounder soap bars have a softer feeling to them and capture the soap feeling I want to create, but the more rectangular bars are more recognizable when simplified and if done in a light enough color like a light pink or a light green, could give off the same effect as if it was a round bar.

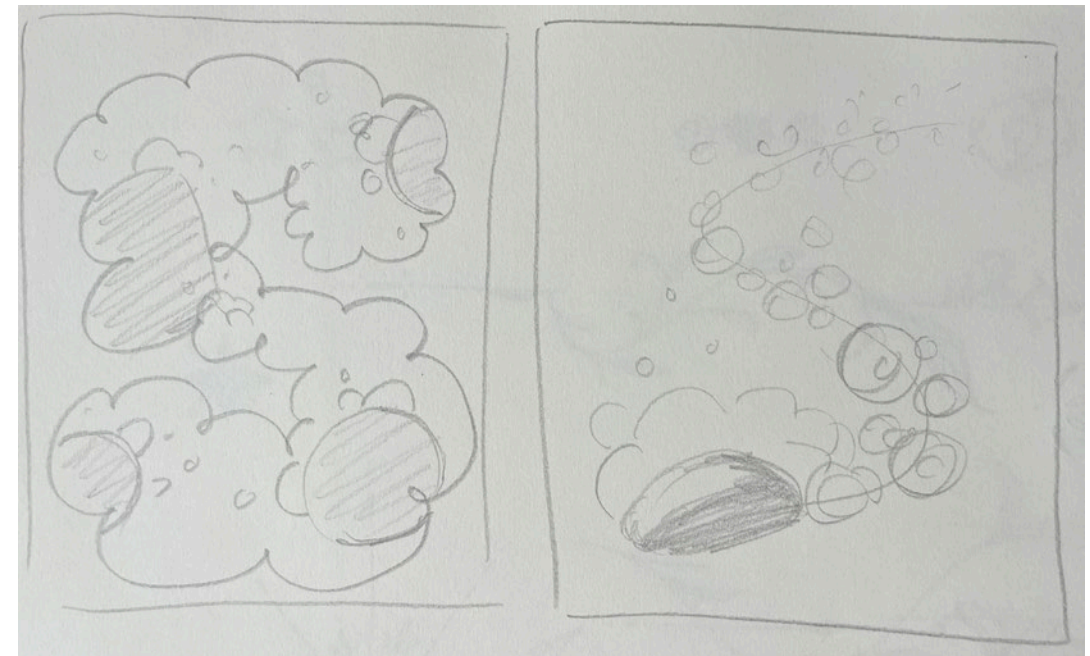
The bubbles present in a handful of the photos are the bubbles I want to include in the design as well as I feel they play a crucial role in recognizing soap as an object. The overall mood I wanted to achieve with this board was a clean yet bubbly feeling.



Initial Soap Sketch Ideas

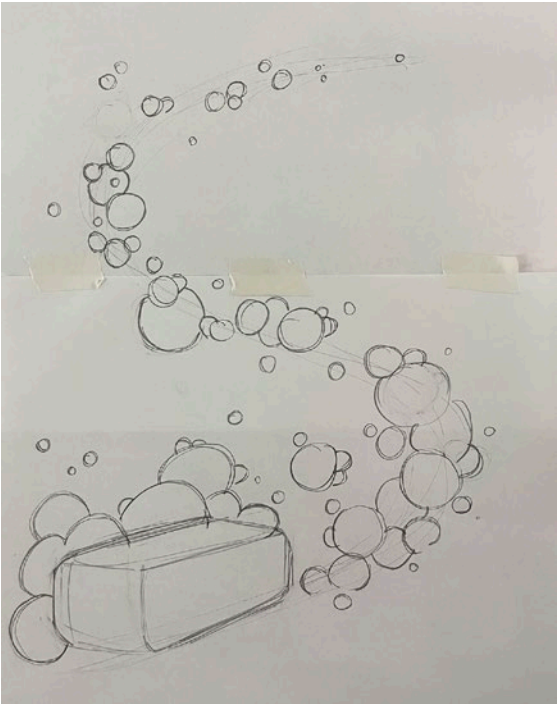
Pictured to the right are two ideas I originally had for my soap design. The first design resembles a more cartoony bubble design and would have different soap bars present inside the bubble shape. This design felt slightly boring to me and almost too cartoony.

The second design was a bigger version of my original idea with the soap bar falling towards the bottom of the page in the shape of an 'S', leaving a trail of bubbles in its path that would help with the shape. The bubbles themselves would be bigger towards the bottom and smaller at the top to create a feeling of depth and movement.



Refined Sketch

Pictured is a to-scale drawing of the soap bar and its path. I decided to go with a more rectangular soap bar for a more recognizable look. At this stage I did not know what colors I was going to use yet in my design. The final design of the bubbles being outlined or clumps of bubbles was not decided yet either.



Refined Digital Sketch

I decided to create the sketch I had done on paper digitally to easily play with different color options and design choices. From the digital design I went with a lighter blue background and a paler pink for the soap bar. The bubbles would have accents of pink in them as well to reflect the soap bar. The design of the bubbles I decided to leave open as well, leaving just the outline of the bubbles instead of filling them in. This I later changed during the crafting process.



Initial Soap Poster Crafting

Pictured is the initial soap design before critique.

I kept the bubble clumps near the bottom of the poster instead of having them be only outlines. The amount of pink highlights in the bubbles was smaller than originally planned as I felt adding more would be too crowded. A handful of the smaller bubbles around the poster I had left being only the outlines as well.

This design I wasn't happy with after I created it. I felt it looked too bland and was missing something but I didn't know what.

The written and oral critique I received about this design helped fix the issues I had with the initial design.

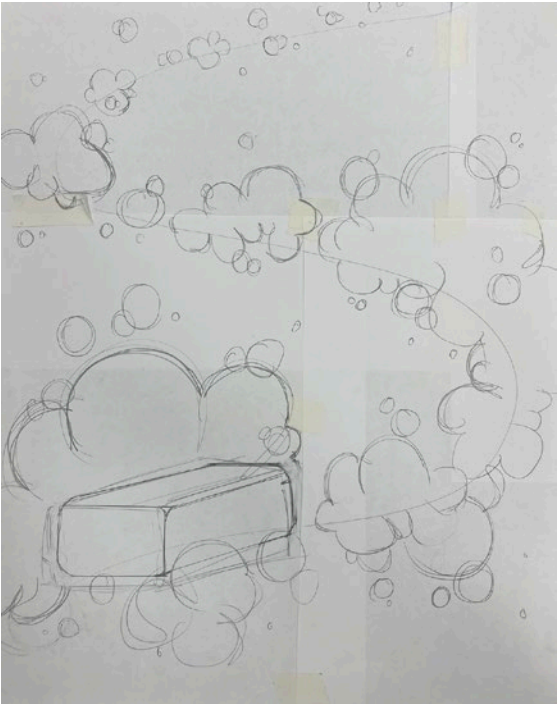
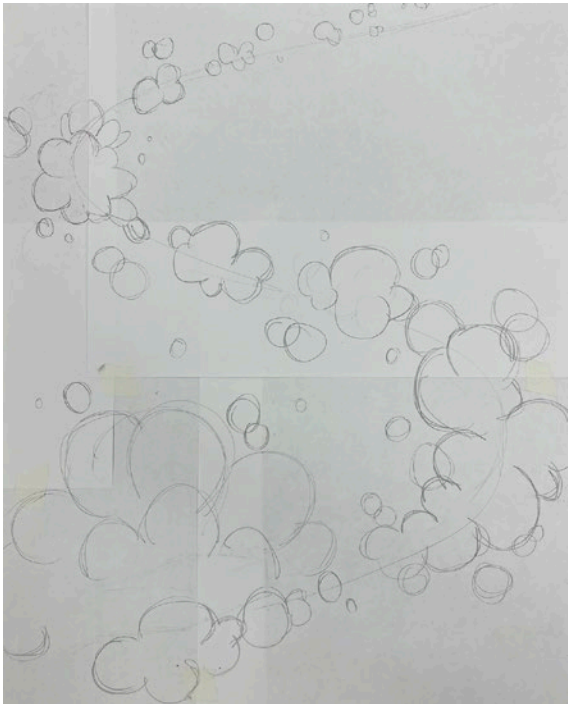
One of the critiques I received was the amount of negative space being overwhelming to the design. The soap and bubbles didn't take up enough space and left too much open making it feel empty and as if it was missing something. The entire design being confined to the barriers of the paper made this empty feeling even more pronounced. I was advised to push the design to go outside of the barriers of the paper and to enlarge the design entirely.

The overall size of the design was an issue as well. While it didn't fit the size of the poster itself in being too small, the difference in size from the top of the 'S' which is supposed to appear further away, and the bottom of the 'S', which is to appear bigger, wasn't drastic enough. I needed to make the bubbles that are supposed to be further much smaller to actually achieve the depth effect I wanted.

The other critique was to change the soap color. The pink made it look like a brick to others at a glance. I scraped the entire design and started from scratch.

Refined Sketch

I redesigned the soap idea to go outside of the poster borders. I enlarged the bubbles at the bottom and as they went up to take up more space. I did not end up using this design for the final since the bubbles and shape of them looked too similar in size throughout the design and resembled smoke too closely from a glance.



Refined Final Sketch

This final sketch had the bubbles and overall design even larger in order to take up more space and leave less negative space than before. The bubbles in this design felt more diverse and provided a larger variety in size and shape and made the overall composition more inviting than before. This was the design I continued with for the final.

Poster Crafting Before Final

Throughout the final crafting of the poster, I made changes to the design as it went along. With the bubble clumps, I left some of them as only outlines that were connected to the clumps unlike the original design with having the only bubbles that were outlines were ones individually crafted and placed on top.

I struggled at this point as I didn't know what to add other than the soap bar and the color reflections from the soap bar. I wanted to include a hint of pink in the design now that I have changed the soap bar from the original pink to the light green.



Mounted Soap Poster

Pictured is my final mounted poster. I focused on making the soap look more like what it is supposed to represent and added more bubbles to fill out the shape of the 'S' more.



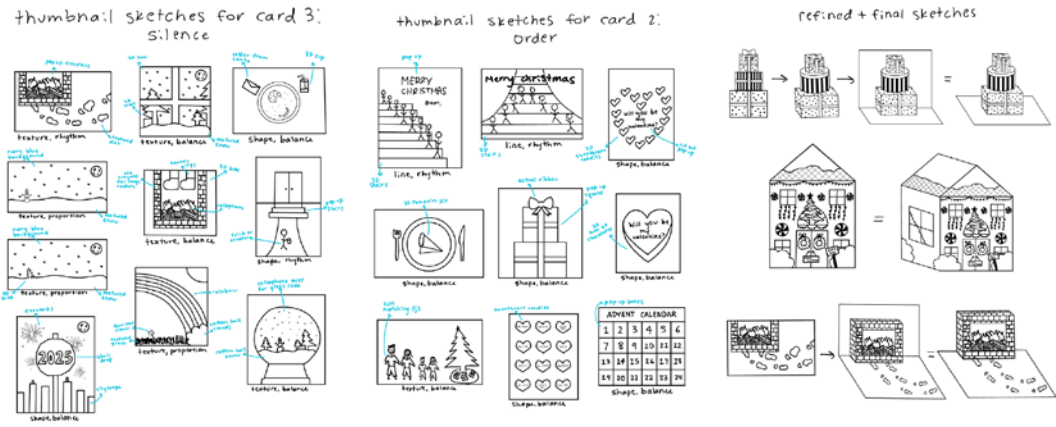
Pop-Up Principles

Co-taught with tenure-track faculty Brooke Hull (bxh5541@psu.edu)

In this assignment, students created a series of **three pop-up cards**, each designed to demonstrate the relationship between an Element of Art, a Design Principle, and a Compositional Theme. The challenge asked students to translate abstract concepts into physical form, moving from **two-dimensional** sketches to **three-dimensional** structures. For example, one card explored Balancing Line (**Line + Asymmetrical Balance + Order**), another examined Growing Contrast (**Shape + Contrast + Increase**), while a third investigated Crowded Space (**Space + Emphasis & Subordination + Congestion**). These thematic combinations pushed students to think critically about how principles could be embodied through paper engineering, movement, and interaction.

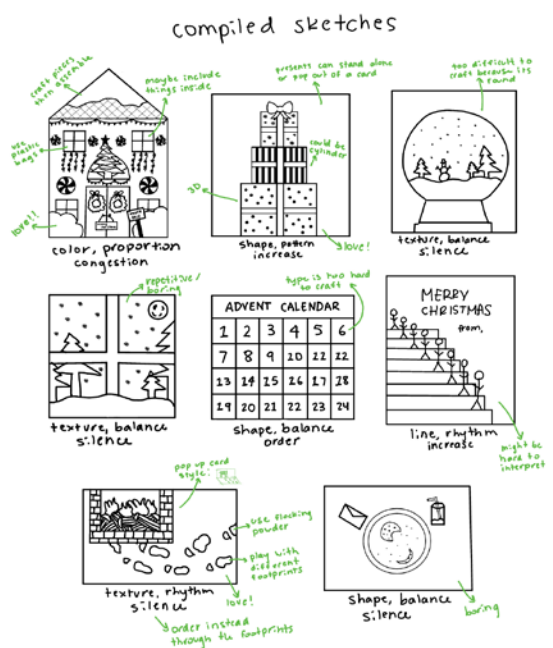
The project was highly process-focused, beginning with **ideation, thumbnail sketches, and construction studies** before advancing to refined prototypes. Frequent critiques provided feedback loops, ensuring students tested how clearly their chosen concepts were communicated. The resulting cards demonstrated not only refined craft skills but also the ability to transform theoretical principles into cohesive visual motifs, showing how design thinking can move seamlessly between the abstract and the tangible

Thumbnail Sketches

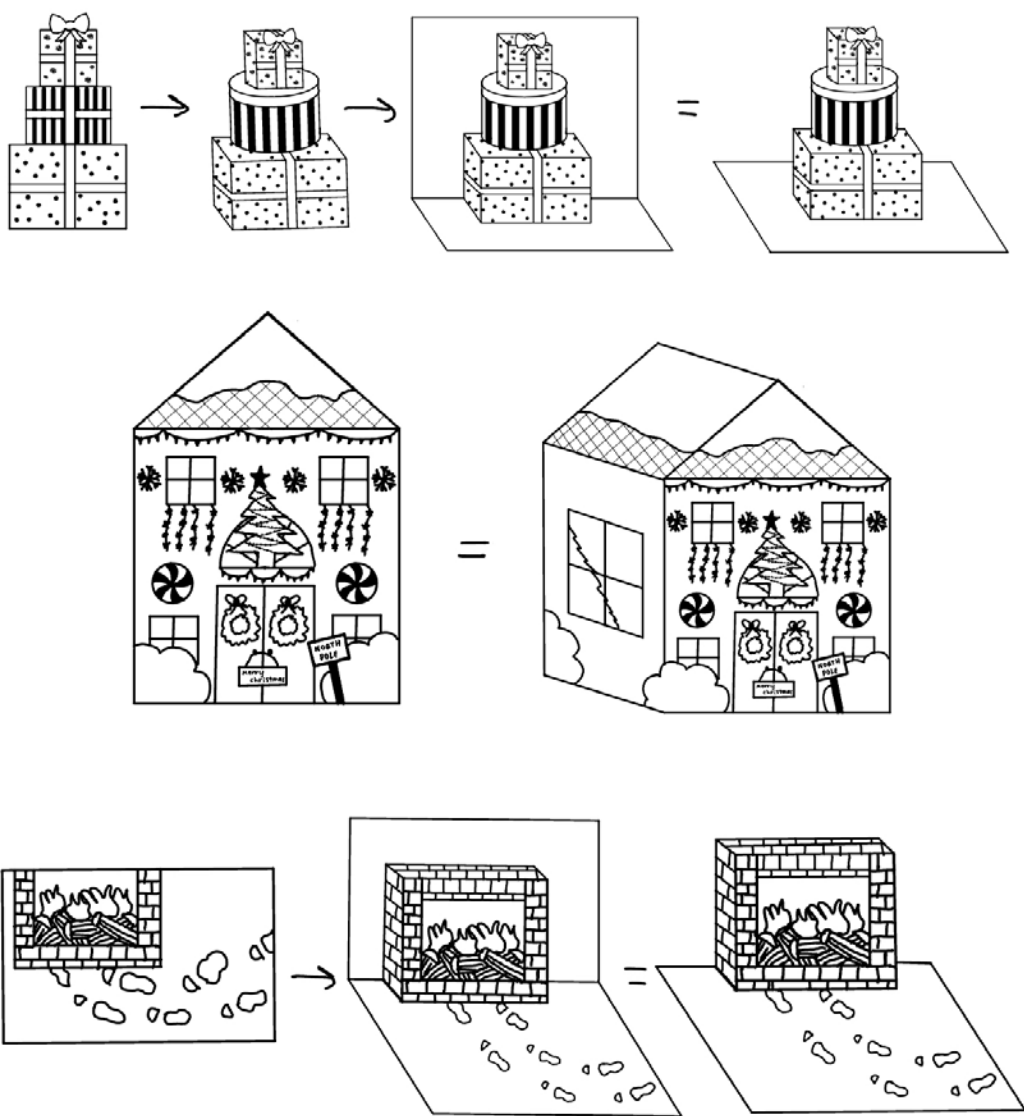


Above: thumbnail sketches
When sketching, I couldn't help but think of ideas for other holidays besides Christmas, so I decided to sketch pop up cards for all types of holidays to see which ideas were strongest. To give my sketching process some structure, I chose three themes (silence, order, and congestion) and sketched ideas that conformed to them. Underneath each sketch I wrote its element and principle, and in blue, I noted details about the sketch for context and further explanation.

Right: compiled thumbnail sketches
After sketching all of my thumbnails, I wanted to compile my favorite ones and choose a theme before review. When looking at all of my thumbnail sketches, I realized that my favorites were the Christmas ones. After showing peers my sketches and receiving their opinions, I felt that Christmas rather than holidays as the theme was stronger and more interesting. I organized my favorite sketches and wrote down critique from my professors in green. They loved the gingerbread house card and gave me ideas to push the idea such as putting things inside the house and using plastic bags to create texture. They liked the simplicity of the presents card and thought of making one of the presents cylinder to create even more shape. We agreed that the snow globe card and advent calendar card would be too difficult to craft. They thought the Christmas card idea wasn't effective and might be hard to interpret, and the window and cookies idea were too boring and repetitive. We loved the idea of Santa's footprints and thought of different ways to execute it through craft. After talking with my professors, it was obvious which cards were the strongest; I chose the gingerbread house, presents, and fireplace idea.

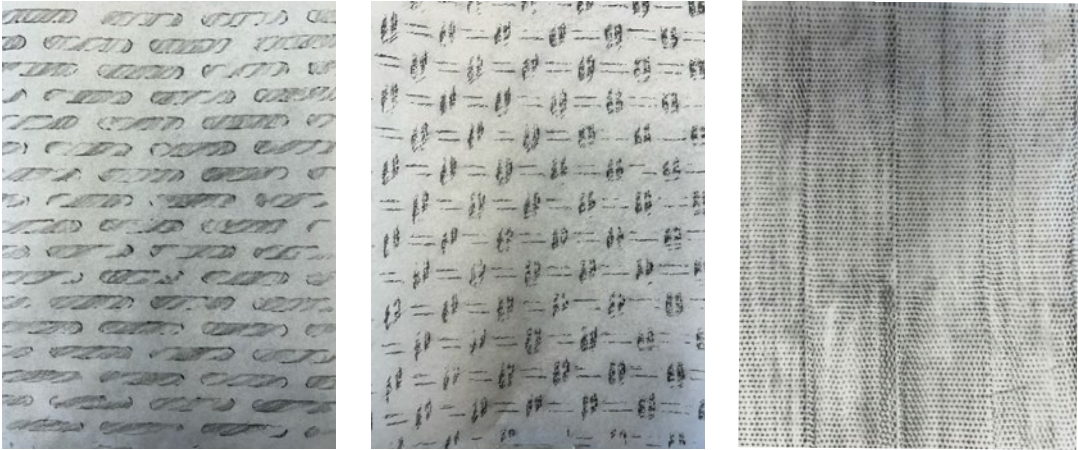


Refined + Final Sketches



Above: refined sketches
After selecting my three cards, I refined my sketches. I drew each card in 3D and drafted the card with different backgrounds to see what was more effective. For the fireplace and presents card, I felt that the cards didn't need a background, and for the gingerbread house, I wanted it to stand alone (the presents ended up standing alone too) because it didn't need a base. When refining my sketch for the presents card, I replaced the middle present with a cylindrical one, which my professor recommended. I felt that this made it more dynamic and pushed the element of shape further. After refinement, I was happy with my sketches and was excited to start crafting.

Texture Activity

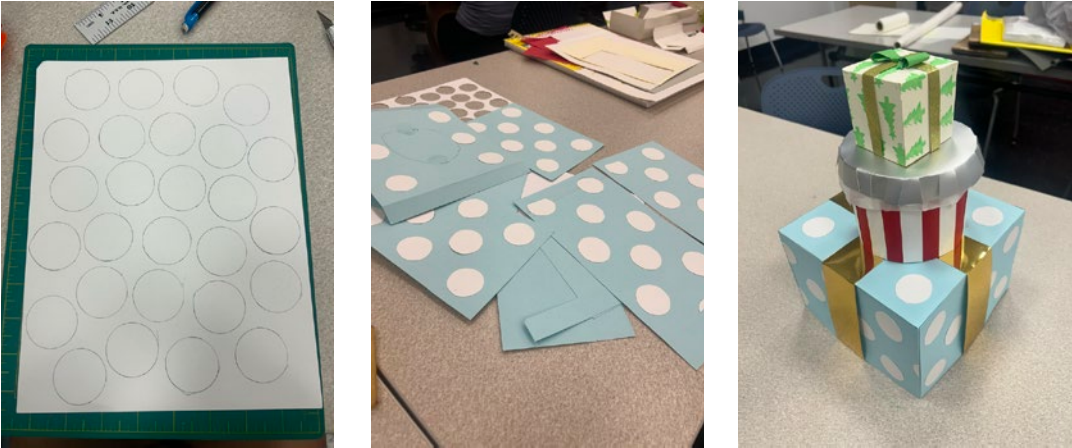
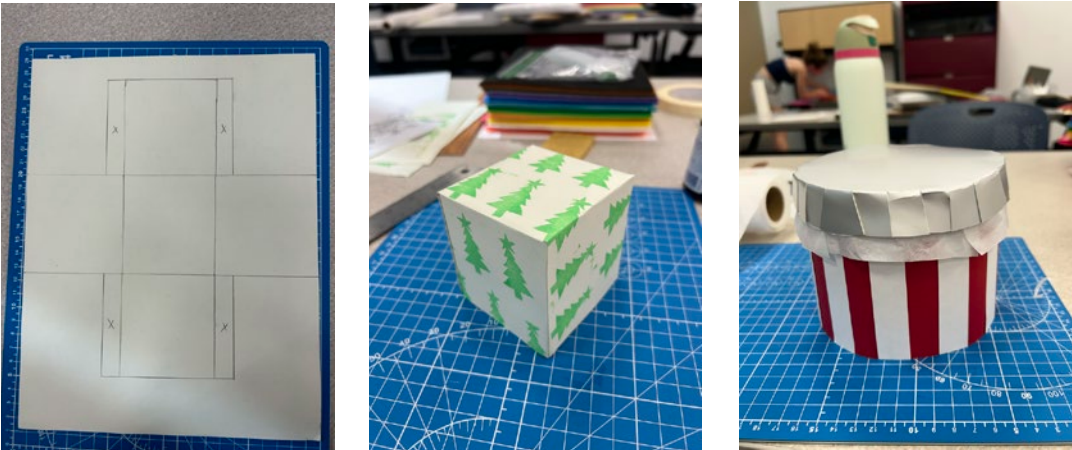


Above: 3 different rubbing textures
Before crafting, we completed a texture activity during class to experiment with making different textures using all kinds of materials. One portion of the activity was to create three different rubbing textures by rubbing charcoal on a surface. I enjoyed this activity because I found some interesting and cool textures. The texture on the left was created by a mat, the texture in the middle was from a woven basket, and the texture on the right was from a seatbelt material.



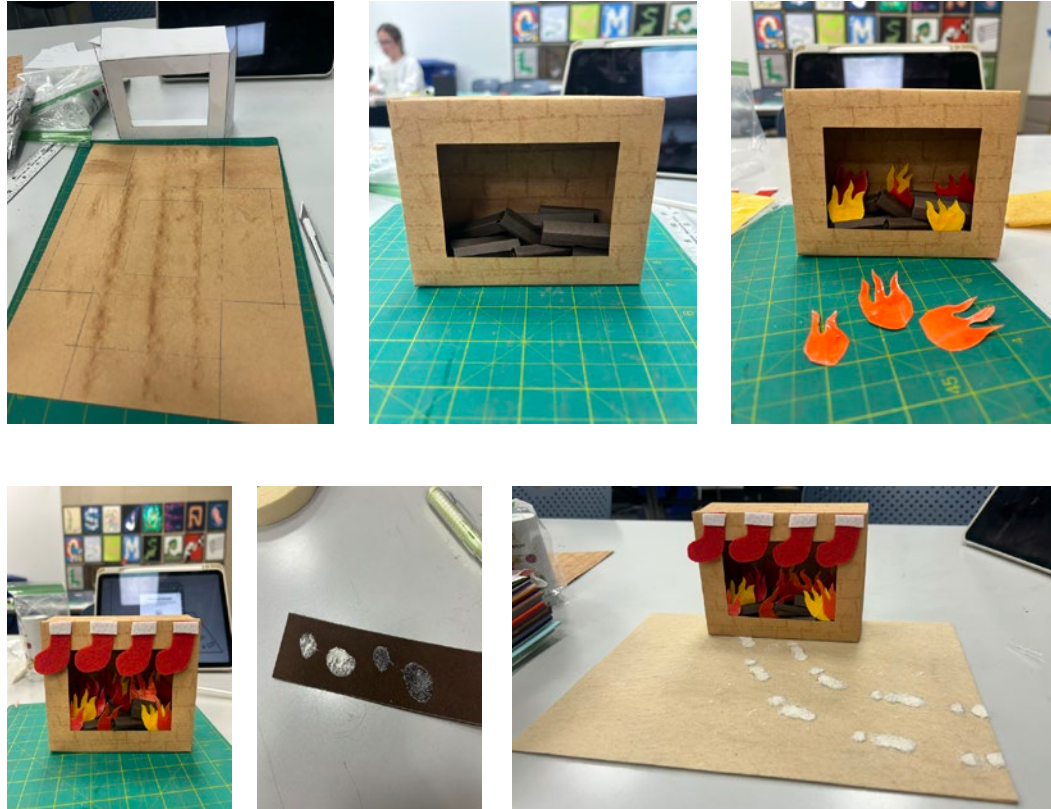
Left and middle: stamp textures
Right: personal experiment texture
The next part of the activity was to create stamps by carving an eraser and experiment with texture on our own. I created an X pattern by carving a lattice pattern onto an eraser, and also created a Christmas tree stamp to make a paper look like wrapping paper, which I ended up using in my project. For personal experiment, I created a brick texture using brown charcoal. I rubbed the charcoal onto the paper to get the rough texture, and also used this in my project.

Crafting For Presents Pop Up Card



Above: crafting process for presents pop up card
When crafting the presents for this card, I wanted each present to showcase something different. The top present was constructed out of the stamped wrapping paper I made during the texture activity. I mapped out the paper construction on the back of the wrapping paper and included tabs to glue on the inside. I constructed a bow to put on top and wrapped the present in gold sparkly "ribbon". The middle present was the hardest to craft because it is round. I wanted this present to look like a popcorn tin, so I took a red strip of paper and glued white stripes on it before constructing it into a cylinder. For the top, I cut out a circular piece of tin-like paper and cut slits to achieve the metal cover look. I put tracing paper underneath to look like tissue paper so that the present was more dynamic and detailed. For the bottom present, I decided to include a polka dot pattern to emphasize shape and made it very large to portray increase. I traced circles on a white piece of paper, cut them out, and glued them in a polka dot pattern onto the paper before constructing the present. I constructed the present by gluing the tabs together on the inside and wrapped the present in gold reflective "ribbon". Overall, I didn't use many colors because I didn't want people to think the element was color. I felt that the scale of each present successfully portrayed increase, the shapes used in the patterns made the element obvious, and the straightforward patterns on the wrapping paper made the element known.

Crafting For Fireplace Pop Up Card



Above: crafting process for fireplace pop up card

The fireplace card was the quickest and easiest to craft because there weren't as many elements. I created a mock fireplace to ensure my paper construction was correct, then copied it onto the back of the brick texture I created during the texture activity and constructed the fireplace. To create logs, I cut out strips of dark brown paper, folded them accordion style, then rolled them up. The folds created the log texture, and by rolling the paper up, it created a swirl that logs have on the ends. I repeated this process until the fireplace was filled with enough logs. To create the fire, I originally wanted the flames to be 3D, but because the cardstock paper was too thick to work with, I ended up making them 2D. To make the flames look more real, I glued plastic bags onto the paper to make it look more reflective and shiny. I then cut out flames in red, orange, and yellow, and stuck them in between logs to create dimension. I was surprisingly pleased with the way the 2D flames looked and was happy with the result. I felt that the fireplace looked a little boring and decided to add stockings, which weren't originally in my sketch. This was a great opportunity to add even more texture to the card because I used felt for the stockings, and I felt it also added more rhythm. When creating the footprints, I tested two materials to see which one resembled snow more: protein powder and salt. Funny enough, the protein powder looked best, so I traced footprints, put glue inside the outlines, and sprinkled protein powder onto the glue. After that, I glued a piece of cardstock to the bottom of the piece of felt to make it more sturdy, and glued the fireplace onto the piece of felt. I really enjoyed crafting this card because I got to play with so many textures.

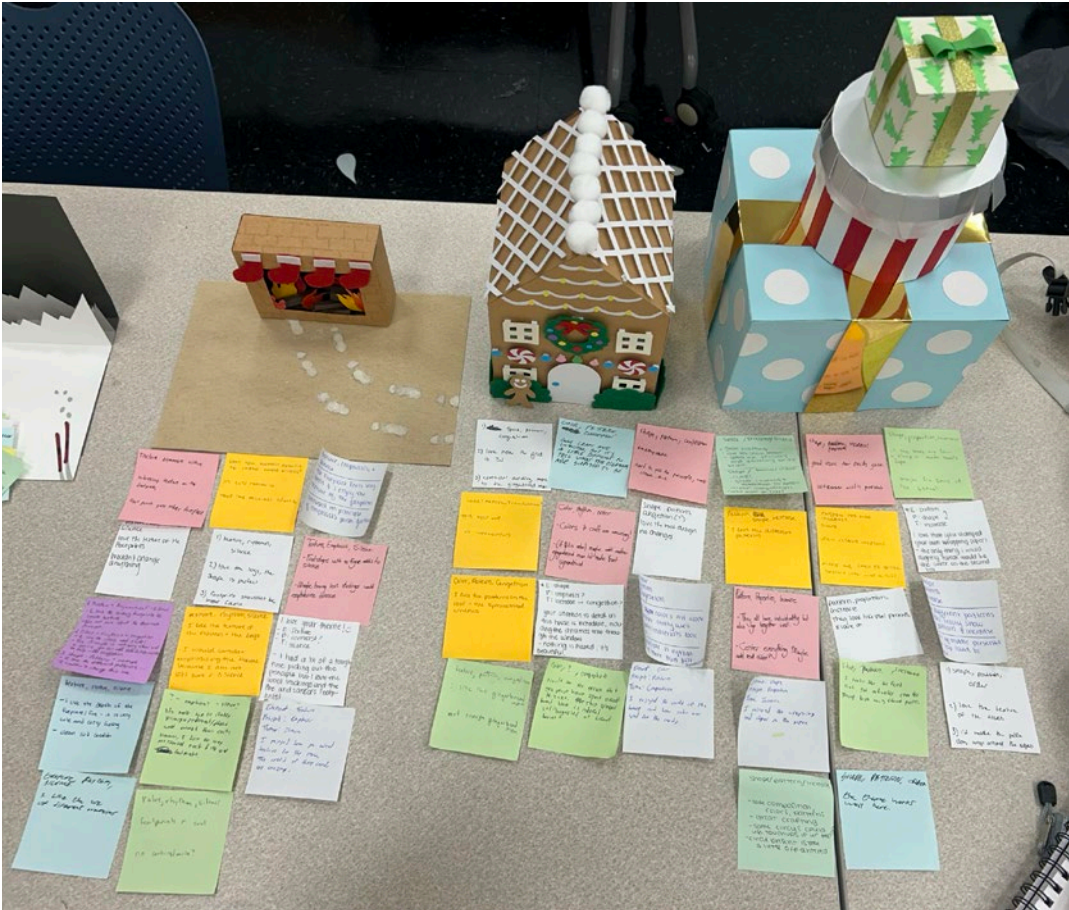
Crafting For Gingerbread House Pop Up Card



Above: crafting process for gingerbread house pop up card

Crafting the gingerbread house was the most time consuming because there were so many pieces to craft. When deciding how to construct the house, I wanted to use the least amount of pieces to make construction easier and more simple. So, I cut out the front and back piece and the sides which included the roof; each piece had flaps that would be glued on the inside. I cut out the windows and taped pieces of plastic bags on the inside to create a glass look. I made outlines for the window because when you make a gingerbread house, you make the windows out of frosting. I added a tree and curtains to the side windows to make it more interesting. For the curtains, I folded red felt accordion style and taped it to make it look like actual curtains. For the front, I made a door, wreath, and candy pieces to fill up the space, and used foam squares to glue them to create dimension. I used as many colors as I could for the candy pieces to convey color, and tried to fill up the space as much as I could to portray congestion without creating tension. I additionally added some bushes and a gingerbread man to fill up the space even more since the bottom felt empty. For the roof, I originally wanted to use cotton balls to create snow, but didn't want it to be confused with texture. Instead, I created a lattice pattern that looked like frosting, and ended up loving the way it looked. After decorating each piece of the house, I glued them together. A final touch I added was putting white cotton balls along the top of the roof to make the house look more fun and interesting; it also covered the crack in between the two roof pieces. Although this process was very long, I enjoyed crafting this card because the outcome was worth it and truly resembled a gingerbread house.

Critique



Above: sticky note critique for each pop up card
For critique, we walked around and left sticky notes where we guessed what each card represents, what we enjoyed, and what could be improved. I personally prefer the other form of critique because this method doesn't allow you to talk with the artist and it gets tiring and repetitive. For my cards, people overall enjoyed them and guessed the correct element, principle, and theme. For the fireplace card, everyone loved the textures I used and the coziness of the fireplace. The thing people generally didn't like was that the footprint went under the fireplace because it didn't make sense. For the gingerbread house card, people loved the colors, craft, roof design, and attention to detail. I appreciated this because it validated my hard work and effort. They suggested I add more gingerbread men and details to push congestion, which I agreed with. For the presents card, people enjoyed the different patterns and especially the stamped wrapping paper. People commented that the middle present looked off and was not centered. I felt that the critique I received was very helpful, and I planned on implementing these suggestions during revision.

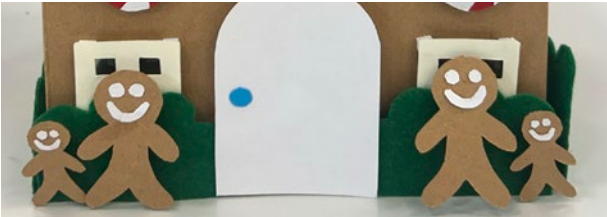
Revisions



Left: revisions for fireplace pop up card
For revision, I needed to get rid of the footprint under the fireplace. To do this, I had to replace the entire carpet because there was no way to remove the protein powder. Since I didn't have the same color of felt, I was forced to choose a different color, and my professor suggested a dark red because it matched well with the other reds and felt more Christmas. This color also made the footprints pop more because of the contrast. I repeated the same process of creating the footprints, and glued the fireplace on this piece of felt. I feel that this revision strengthened this card.



Left: revisions for gingerbread house pop up card
For revision, I needed to add more details and gingerbread men. After receiving critique, I realized that I needed to push proportion more because nobody recognized that principle, so my professor thought I could utilize gingerbread men to do so by using scale. I started by adding more gingerbread men to the front and made two of them smaller to emphasize proportion. Then, I added gingerbread men to the inside of the side windows to fill some space. On the sides, I also added a line of colorful candy and two candy mints to make the sides more interesting and congested. I felt that these revisions helped push my principle and theme.



Left: revisions for presents pop up card
For revision, I needed to fix the middle present because it looked off. I took the original lid off and removed the tracing paper. Since I didn't have any shiny silver paper left, I had to use a sparkly one because it was the most similar. I cut out a strip of that paper and glued it around the top using foam squares to create dimension and to make it look like a lid. Then, I traced the top of the present onto the sparkly paper, cut it out, and glued it to the top. When regluing the presents together, I made sure all of them were centered. I feel that the middle present looks cleaner and more accurate.

Final Pop Up Cards



Above: final fireplace pop up card (texture, rhythm, silence)

This project was the most challenging for me because I struggled to successfully represent every element, principle, and theme in each card. The critique and revisions definitely helped make my cards as successful as they can be, and I'm happy with the outcome. I really enjoyed playing with texture and working in 3D during this project because we had more freedom than past projects and I got to be more creative and innovative. I put in a lot of time and effort into each of these cards, and I'm glad people recognize and appreciate my craft and attention to detail. My favorite card is the fireplace one because of how I created the footprints. I really love each of these cards and how they turned out, and I'm proud of this project. Getting to explore texture has made me excited to work with other forms in the future.



Above: final gingerbread house pop up card (color, proportion, congestion)



Above: final presents pop up card (shape, pattern, increase)

Student 2

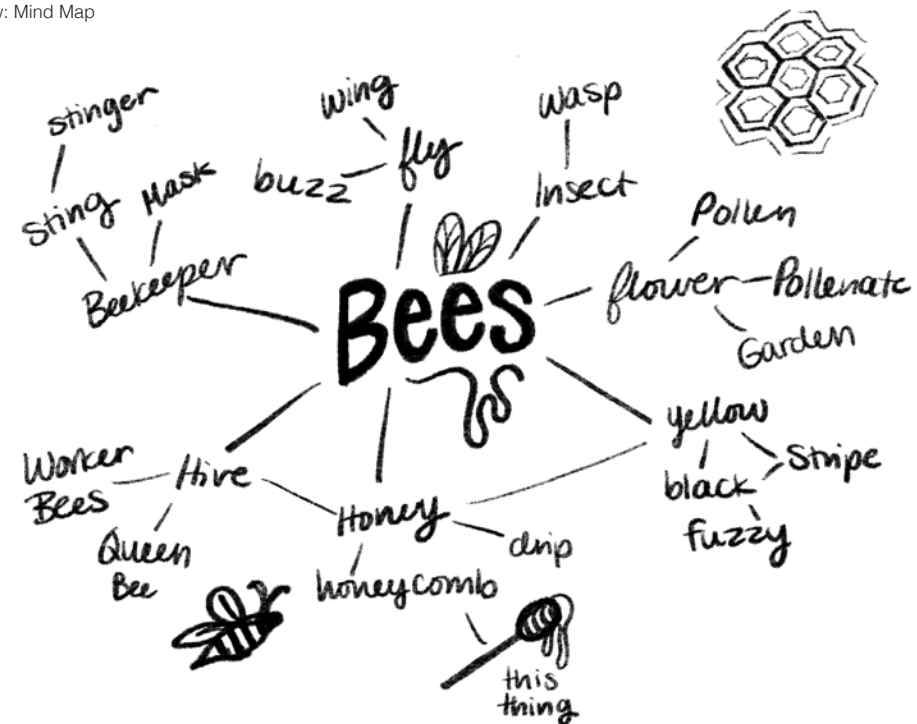
In this project I worked on developing a series of three pop up cards with a continued motif. Each card explores one element, principle, and theme of design. I chose bees as my motif and developed ideas surrounding them to create my initial sketches. I experimented with making 3D elements out of paper, and crafted different templates and paper studies. Using different materials, I studied textures and used what I learned to develop my cards.

- Card 1: Element: Color, Principle: Pattern, Theme: Order
- Card 2: Element: Texture, Principle: Rhythm, Theme: Increase
- Card 3: Element: Shape, Principle: Proportion, Theme: Congestion

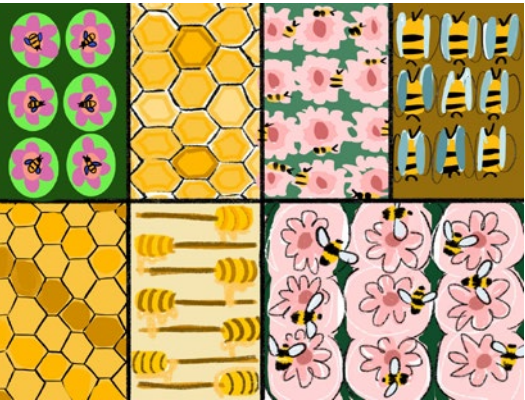
Ideation

I used a mind map to brainstorm ideas related to bees. This helped me expand on my ideas and think more creatively.

Below: Mind Map



Initial Thumbnail Sketches



Left: Card 1: Color, Pattern, Order

Here I used bright colors like pink, yellow, blue, and green to convey the element of color. I looked into patterns like stripes and honeycombs, but decided to expand on the idea of organizing flowers into a pattern. Lining the visual elements up into a sort of grid helps to create order throughout the card.



Left: Card 2: Texture, Rhythm, Increase

For this card, I focused on creating a spiral to guide my visuals. This creates rhythm, and enables a clear increase in scale. To convey texture, I thought about textures in nature that relate to bees such as honey, fur, and wings. This helped guide my sketches.



Left: Card 3: Shape, Proportion, Congestion

Here, I looked at shapes that relate to bees such as wings, petals, and beehives. I pushed these concepts and altered their scales to create a contrast in proportion. To make the card feel congested, I played with the idea of having the shapes pushing against the sides of the cards. This created a crowded feel.

Paper Construction Studies

Using different types of paper and cardstock, I experimented with bending and cutting paper to create a pop up effect. I started developing ideas for how to create flowers that pop off of the page. This helped me make my final sketches and begin crafting.

Below: Paper flower constructions



Right: Small paper construction studies

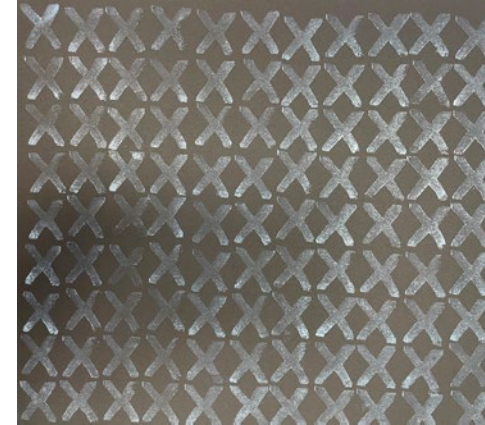


Above: Detached paper flower construction



Texture Activity

I carved stamps out of erasers and used ink to stamp them into patterns. I also explored rubbing charcoal on paper on top of different objects to create texture. Using paint markers I drew on paper, plastic, and other objects to create colorful textures.



Above and Below: Eraser stamp patterns



Above: Charcoal textures

Below: Paint textures



Final Sketches

Here are the final sketches based off of my initial thumbnail sketches. I chose to expand upon the initial sketches that best exemplified the element, principle, and theme that I am aiming to portray. While sketching, I kept in mind how to incorporate the paper construction and texture elements so the cards had a 3D element.



Above: Card 1: Color, Pattern, Order

Below: Card 2: Texture, Rhythm, Increase

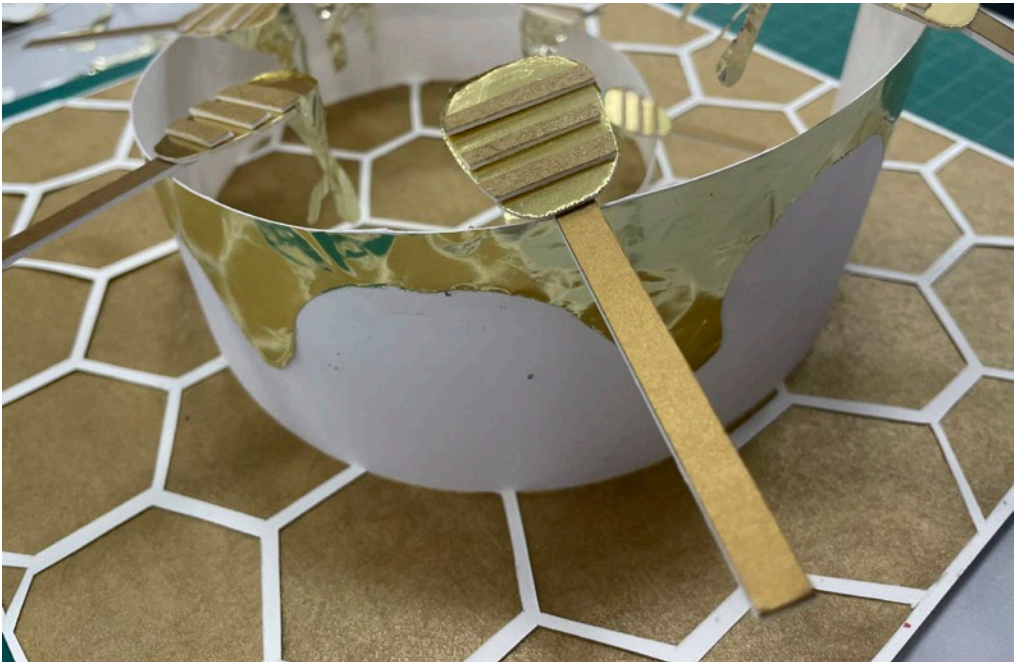


Below: Card 3: Shape, Proportion, Congestion



Initial Crafting

I began crafting based upon my final sketches. I made many templates and used paper, matboard, and cardstock to create my cards.



Initial Completed Cards



Above: Card 1: Color, Pattern, Order



Above: Card 2: Texture, Rhythm, Increase

To make these cards connect and make sense as a series, I used specific colors, numbers, and shapes. I used the numbers 3, 6, and 9 as a basis for the cards. The first card has 9 flowers and 3 rows. Each flower has 6 petals. There are 9 bees, each with 3 stripes. The bee in card 3 also has three stripes and its hexagon has 6 sides. The hexagon shape is also present in card 2. There, each stirring stick has 3 stripes and there are 9 of them. I used the same blue and yellow colors, and kept the theme of geometric shapes and circular appearances throughout all of the cards.

Below: Card 3: Shape, Proportion, Congestion



Critique

Card 1:

- Pick up glue marks
- Erase pencil marks

Card 2:

- Stabilize stirring sticks
- Glue down honey paper
- Pick up glue marks

Card 3:

- Glue down the edges on the outside of the hexagon
- Make congestion clearer



Revisions

Cards 1 and 2:

I fixed some crafting errors and touched up stray marks.

Card 3:

I reexamined how to convey congestion in a clear way, and decided to change a few parts of this card. To push the idea that the bee wings are expanding into the hexagon, I increased their size. I also crafted more detail on the wings to fill out the space and create contrast with white against the dark blue background. To emphasize the congestion further, I lengthened the antennae and legs, which reinforced the principle of proportion as well.



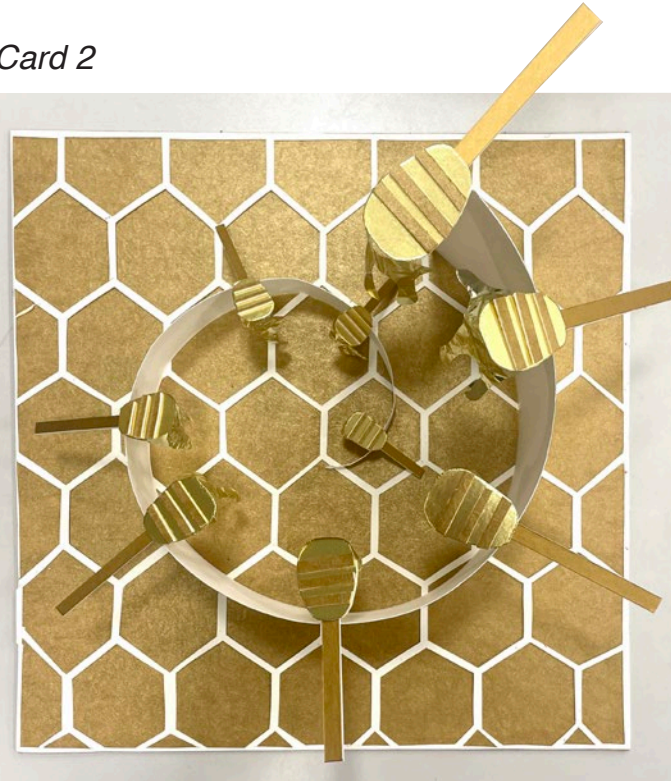
Final Pop Up Cards

Card 1



Element: **Color**, Principle: **Pattern**, Theme: **Order**

Card 2



Element: **Texture**, Principle: **Rhythm**, Theme: **Increase**

Card 3



Element: **Shape**, Principle: **Proportion**, Theme: **Congestion**

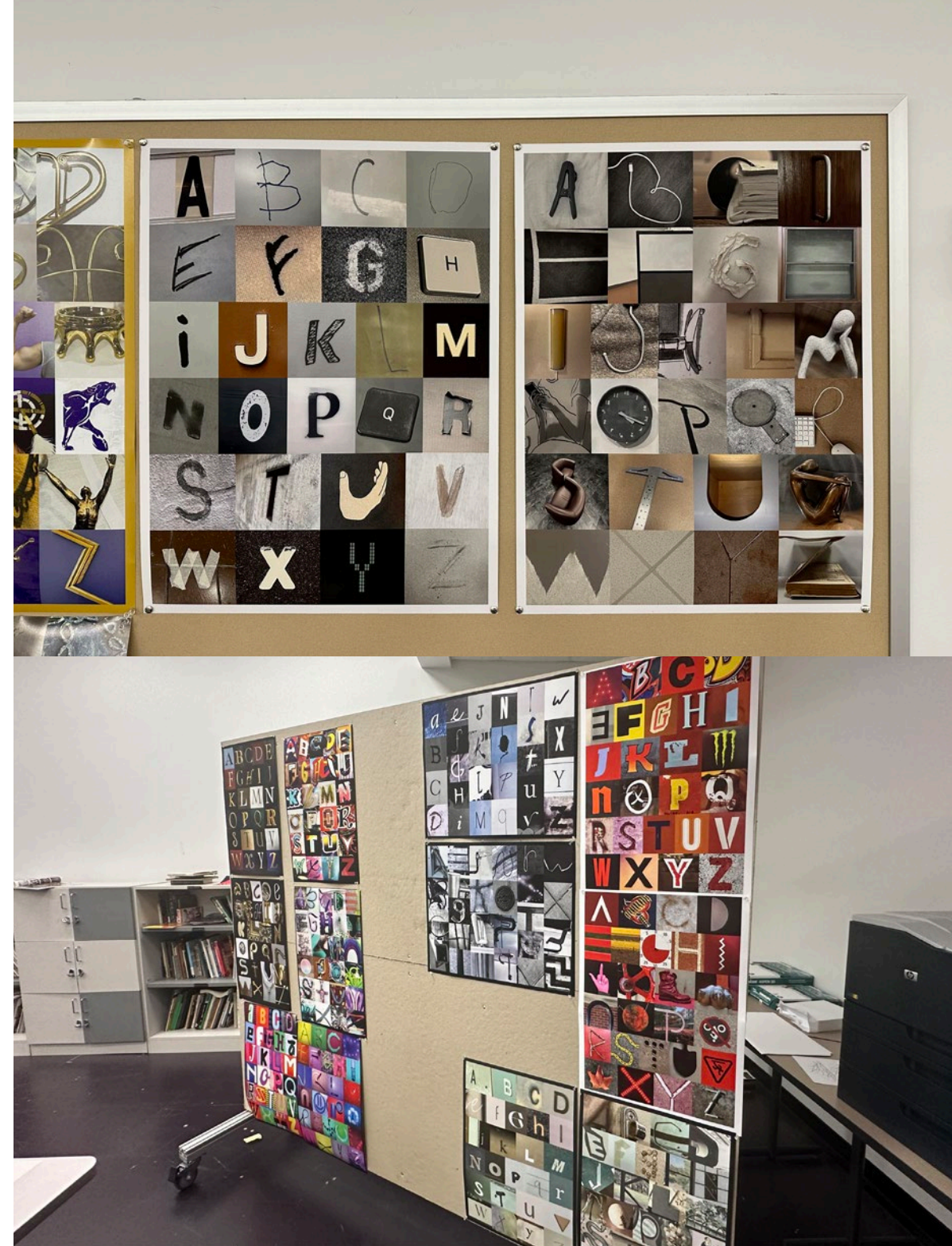
GD 201: Typography 1 | Fall 2024

Co-taught with tenure-track faculty Brooke Hull (bxh5541@psu.edu)

Typography I is an intermediate-level studio course focused on the practical and analytical application of typography across a variety of formats. Students build a strong foundation in typographic principles, hierarchy, and grid systems, while also exploring more experimental approaches to type. The course introduces historical and contemporary perspectives on typography, encouraging students to see type not only as a functional tool but also as a medium for conceptual expression

The class was structured to be highly feedback-driven and process-based, with students presenting drafts regularly and refining their work through critique. Projects ranged from **found type posters and research into non-Western designers to branding for fictional events and the development of a collective class publication.**

Daily exercises, workshops, and type activities reinforced technical skills while allowing space for creative exploration. By the end of the semester, students demonstrated both technical mastery and conceptual growth, producing a body of work that showed how typography can inform identity, communication, and cultural meaning.



Expanding Design Canons

Co-taught with tenure-track faculty Brooke Hull (bxh5541@psu.edu)

This assignment asked students to research and highlight a designer from outside the Western canon, addressing the gaps and biases in graphic design history. Each student selected a historical or contemporary designer whose work is often overlooked and created a system that celebrated their contribution. The system included a lettermark and wordmark, along with a simple but cohesive set of design tools: a typographic palette, a color scheme, and a pattern.

Once the visual system was established, students applied it to a chosen deliverable that helped share their designer's story with a wider audience.

Options included **social media carousels, merchandise, or designed booklets/zines**. The project emphasized research-driven design, typographic decision-making, and systems thinking, while also inviting students to question design history and explore perspectives beyond the familiar canon. Critiques and feedback throughout the process encouraged students to refine their choices and ensure their work communicated both the style and the significance of their chosen designer.

Student 1

SECTION 01

RESEARCH

researching designers
choosing gopi prasannaa
project board
mood board

RESEARCHING DESIGNERS

gopi prasannaa

- An Indian-Tamil man
- Film and show posters + promotions
- Illustrator & Artist
- Features the main actor as the center of his posters

jiyoon lee

- CEO of Studio XXX
- A Korean woman
- Concept designer for K-Pop artists
- Album design, concept, and posters

hannah beachler

- A female black production designer
- Designer for Beyonce's Lemonade, Black is King, and Black Panther
- Infuses her cultural into all of her work
- Utilizes many patterns

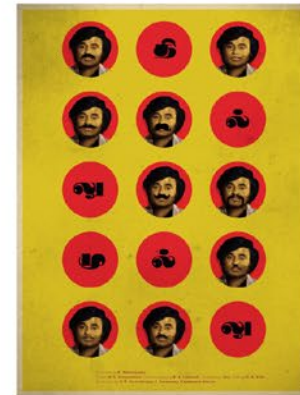
CHOOSING GOPI PRASANNA

In Indian cinema, fans eagerly wait for the posters of their favorite heroes and heroines; to catch a glimpse of what will be their whole world for 3 hours. Movies and their promotional materials play a major cultural role in South India – posters are plastered everywhere, first glimpses are shared across the internet, and people celebrate every bit of content that is released. The anticipation lies in the material released before the film. Gopi Prasannaa has mastered this art of promotional movie design, creating posters for some of the most popular films in the recent decade. Originally a programmer, Prasannaa is now a graphic designer who has worked on over 110 films. He fits outside the canon because of his work in a foreign movie industry. The nature of cinema in India shapes the way his posters are designed. They are vastly different from the typical Hollywood posters since they suit a different audience. Prasannaa approaches his posters with the intent to tell a story. He wants the

viewer to feel the energy of the film – a peak into what the cinematic experience will be. Due to the worship of actors in Indian cinema, many of his designs feature the leading actor as the primary figure of the composition. Since there is a lot of text that is placed on the poster, the title is placed in an area where the additional text can be added around it. Tamil script is occasionally modified into different shapes and forms to reflect the mood of the film. Looking through his portfolio, it's incredible to see how the movie's mood vastly changes the poster design. They all comprise of the same elements, but the way Prasannaa places the images, modifies the text, adds textures, and plays with perspective changes the feeling entirely. As a Tamilian who loves film, some of my favorite movie posters are made by him. I still remember the first time I saw them, and the anticipation I felt waiting for their release.

PROJECT BOARD

Gathered a selection of Prasanna's posters to get a sample of his design style. Attributes include: bold, chaotic, dynamic, intricate, and attention-grabbing.



SECTION 02

LETTERMARK

thumbnail sketches: round one

refined sketches: round one

thumbnail sketches: round two

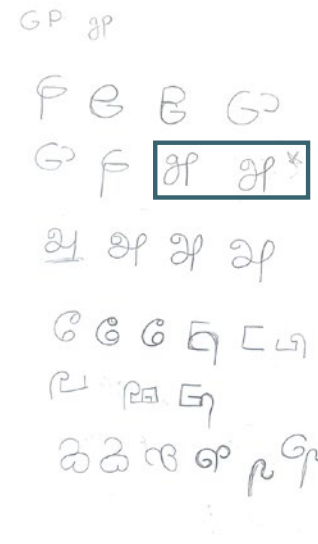
refined sketches: round two

digital iterations + final lettermark

THUMBNAIL SKETCHES

round one: conceptualization

Sketching began by taking concepts found in the design and mood boards and ideating off of them. From critique: lettermarks inspired by Tamil letters, Tamil calligraphy, and pixel + calligraphy combinations were the most liked. I took these ideas and began refining their form.



Inspired by Tamil Letters



Inspired by Coding



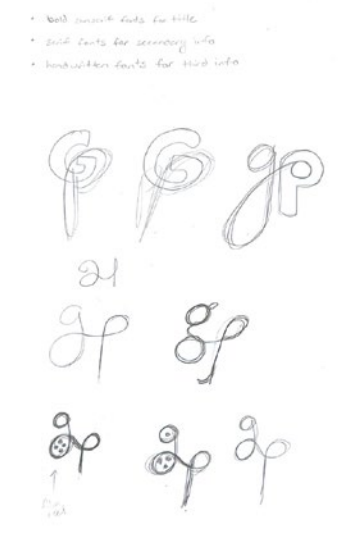
Inspired by Pixels + Calligraphy



Inspired by Tamil Calligraphy



Inspired by Serif Type

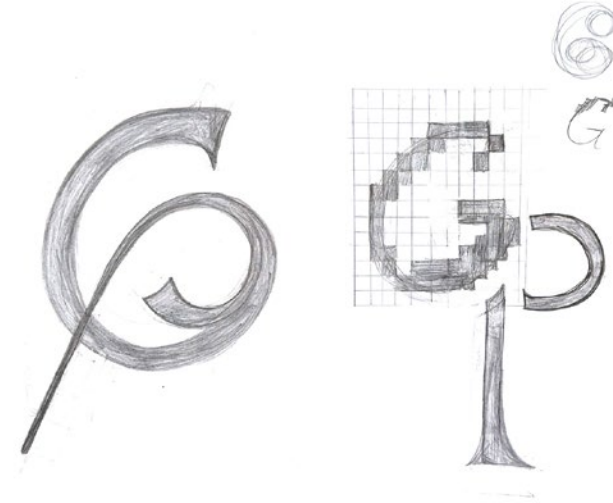


Final Concepts

REFINED SKETCHES

round one: the first digital drafts

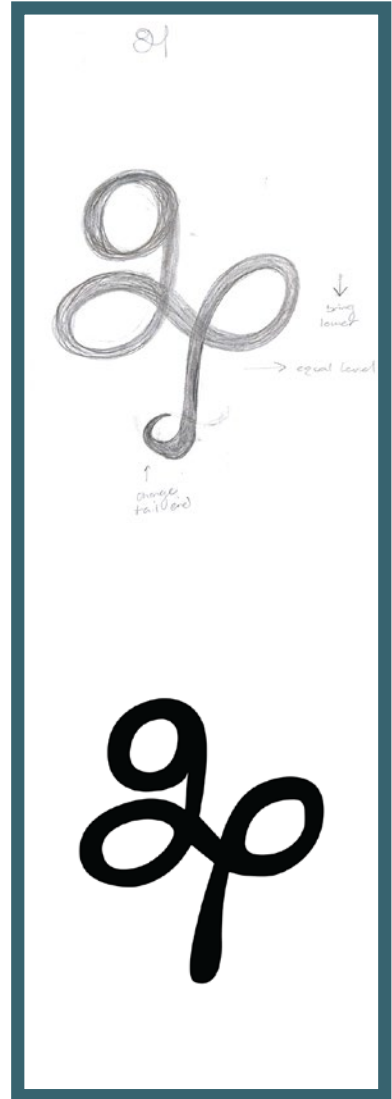
Once the form was refined, I created larger-scale final sketches. These were then digitized in B&W and brought for critique. The third concept was unanimously the favorite, but there were notes on (1) adjusting the weight of the strokes and (2) bringing the letterforms closer together. At this stage, the lettermark looks flat and could be interpreted as an “H”.



Concept 01: Tamil Calligraphy



Concept 02: Pixel + Serif

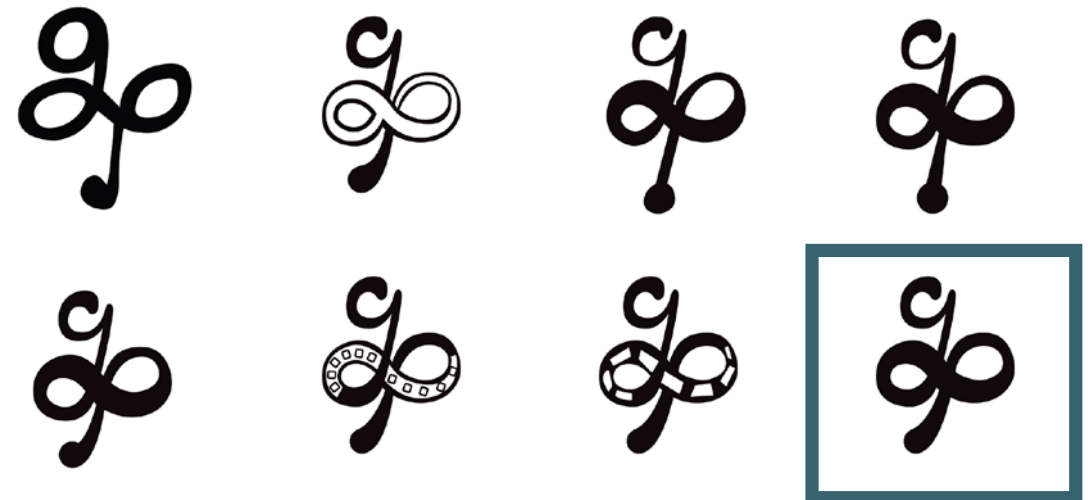
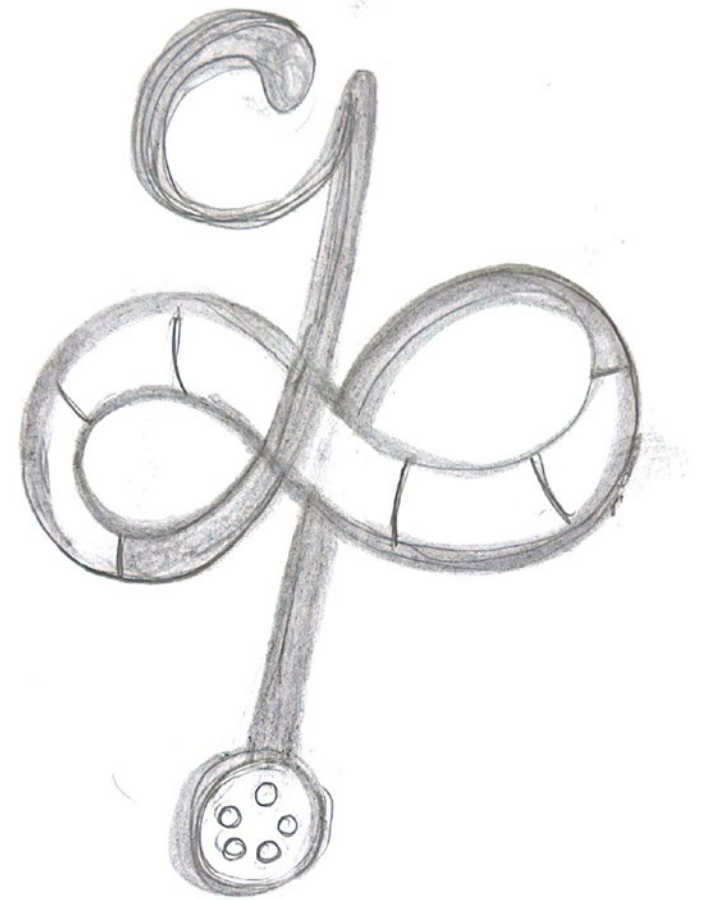


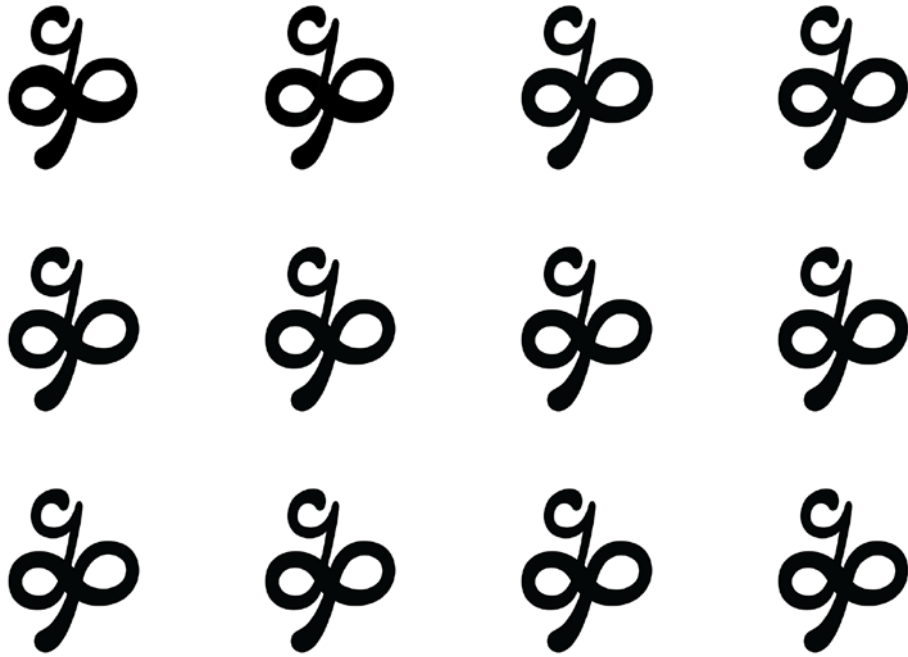
Concept 03: Tamil Letters

REFINED SKETCHES

round two: finalizing the form

Through the thumbnails, I was able to find small details I wanted in my lettermark: a curve into the open counter of the “G”, an infinity sign connecting the “G” and “P”, and the whole letter coming out of a film reel. This sketch was digitized and more iterations were made. I realized that I wasn’t a fan of the reel, so I removed it and simplified the form.





DIGITAL ITERATIONS

I recieved critique that said to decrease the weight of the infinity strokes and clean up the vectorization. The iterations above reflect these changes.

final
lettermark (B&W)

SECTION 03

WORDMARK

exploring type faces
narrowing type options
choosing filson
text placement
finalizing the lockup
final lockup

EXPLORING TYPE FACES

which type works
best?

The wordmark process began by researching a variety of typefaces. I tried choosing typefaces that varied in classification, specifically sans-serif and serif. I focused on those two because I believed they would fit the calligraphic nature of my lettermark, as well as be legible as a body text.



Gopi Prasannaa



Gopi Prasannaa



Gopi Prasannaa



Gopi Prasannaa



Gopi Prasannaa



Gopi Prasannaa



Gopi Prasannaa



Gopi Prasannaa



Gopi Prasannaa



Gopi Prasannaa



Gopi Prasannaa



Gopi Prasannaa



Gopi Prasannaa



Gopi Prasannaa



Gopi Prasannaa



Gopi Prasannaa

NARROWING THE OPTIONS

does it look good
as a lettermark &
as body text?

Once I decided the typefaces that paired best with the lettermark, I looked into how the type would look as body text. These are the two extreme uses of the typeface; a type that works for both will therefore work for everything else in between.



Gopi Prasannaa

Sed quam experum quidem quia
nimusdam restore rerios rehenis
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faceaqu untusdam fugit magnimp
oribus dero ipsapit landi optatur, nis
eaquunt ioressinulpa dolorehenem
es eseratem aut earum dem deliciae
repre liqui dollaut que voluptur restis
aut magnis qui tem volestiuri sus
etum fugiam endigenis molo modit

Typeface: Filson Soft



Gopi Prasannaa

Anducit, ad quatemporiorro
iliquod itisqua metur, cora
voluptas assimin es aut as sita diti
doluptatem quodis quamenihita
dolo dolupidio mi, tendelit et
litae volonibus dolore, quataqua
dolupicias anditi aut omnist,
quis aut adit voluptae num
acerate sequidias nonse dolupta
dolupturio. Em ium dollace

Typeface: Broadacre



Gopi Prasannaa

Mus est dollorro te pratat fugit mod
quosandi ut am lam hil mo endia dis
asi cumquam, que corende lluptas
pliquuntis quis dem eos corepeditior
rera veleniminus esenem ea ducimi,
ex eat volorec uptatiur? Qui dolendi
repuditassus estrum accus eossinvendi
velitat maio magnis et por as eum, cores

Typeface: Monarcha

CHOOSING FILSON

the type that
looks good with
everything

Filson was selected due to the single story “a” and the even distribution of stroke weight. Filson Soft matched perfectly with the curviness of the lettermark, while Filson Pro was perfect for any additional text in the system.





TEXT PLACEMENT

With the type selected, I started to experiment with the position of the wordmark in correlation with the lettermark. I played around with position, spacing, arrangement, and type case.





FINALIZING THE LOCKUP

The position of the text to the left of the lettermark seemed the most comfortable visually. I iterated with the weight of the type as well as the distance between wordmark and lettermark. Prasannaa's name is in uppercase to contrast with the lowercase lettermark.

final
lockup (B&W)

SECTION 04

COLOR PALETTES

swatching posters

forming color palettes

color testing

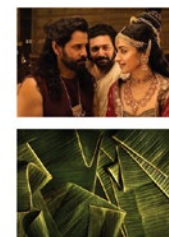
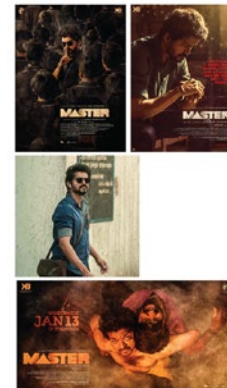
final color palette

application of color palette

SWATCHING POSTERS

taking color from
the source itself

I began the process of creating a color palette by looking at Prasannaa's own work. I chose posters that reflected the colors found in most of Prasannaa's portfolio and extracted color swatches from them.



COLOR TESTING

I tested the colors from each palette on the lettermark to see which colors fit the form the best. I noticed that I liked certain colors from each palette, so I combined them to create a new one.



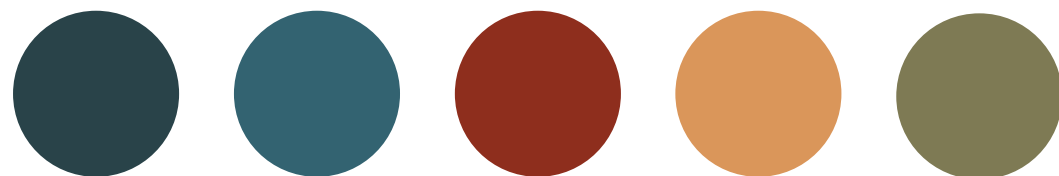
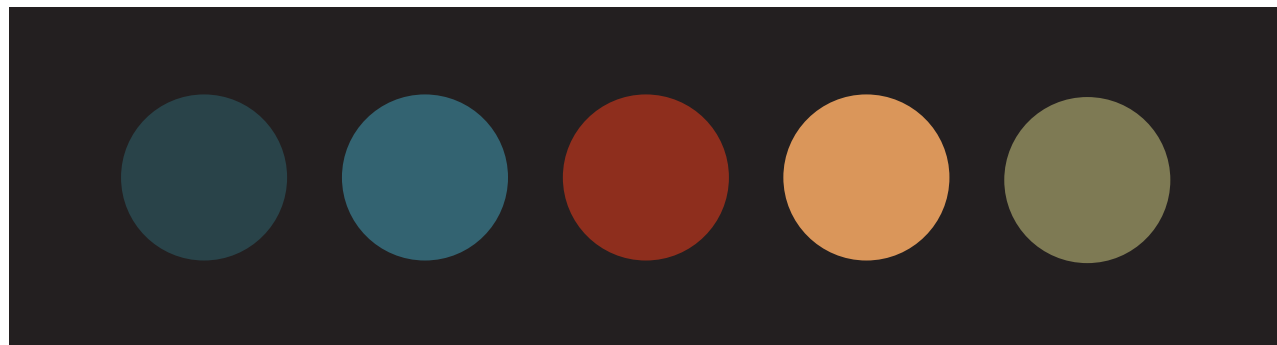
Color Palette: Vettaiyan 03



Color Palette: MASTER



Combination Palette



FINAL COLOR PALETTE

The final color palette was tested against Prasannaa's portfolio; it matched many of the posters and captured his style perfectly. These were applied to the lockup in a manner where the colors would nicely contrast with each other.



final letter +
lockup (color)

SECTION 05

PATTERNS

lettermark patterns

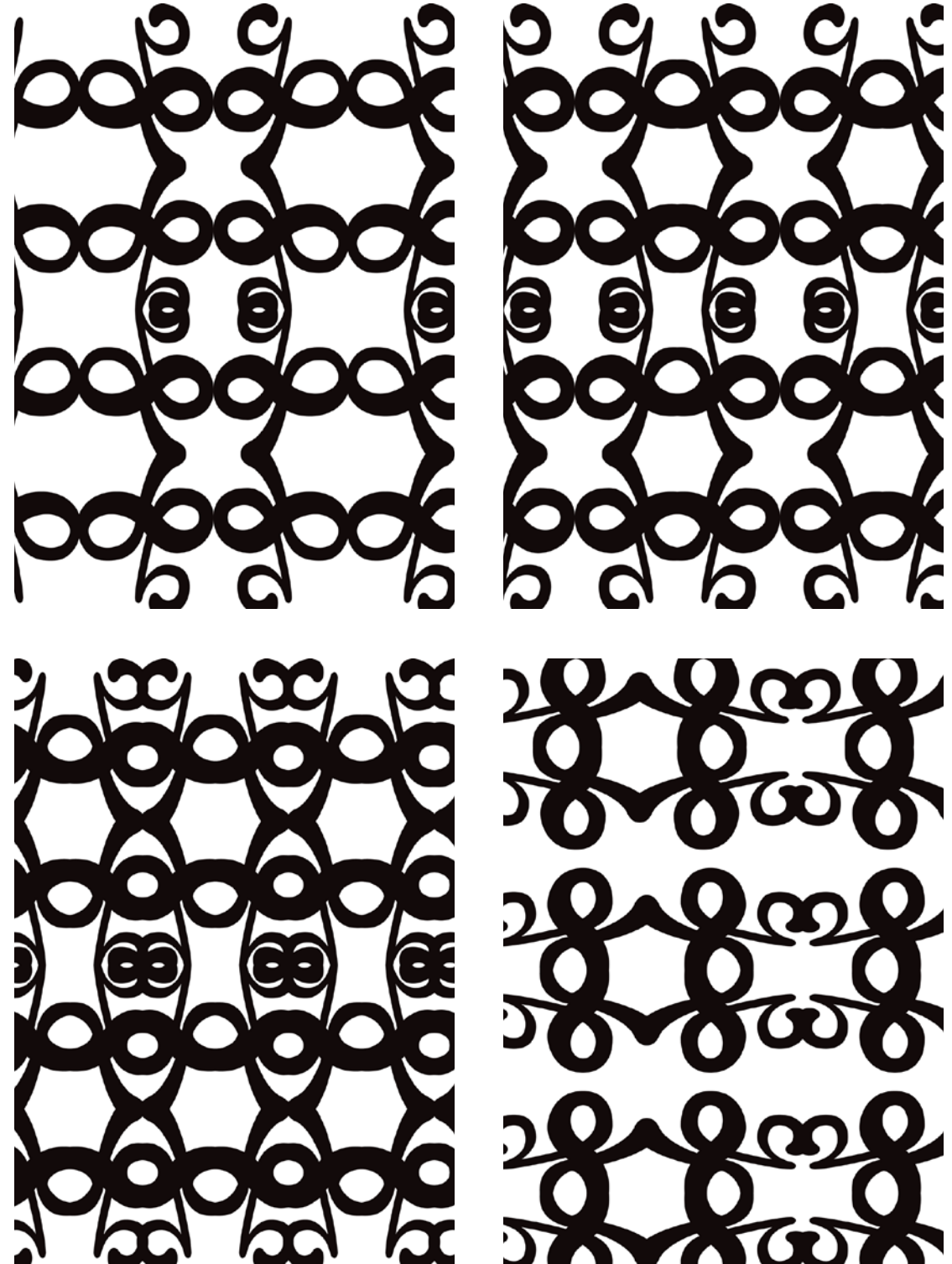
film reel patterns

final motif & pattern

LETTERMARK PATTERNS

round 01: overlap repetition

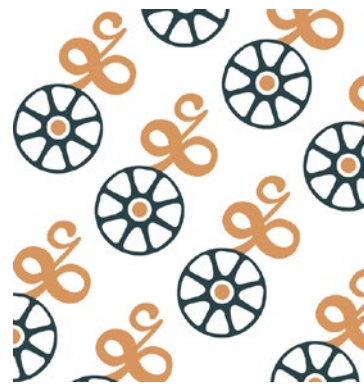
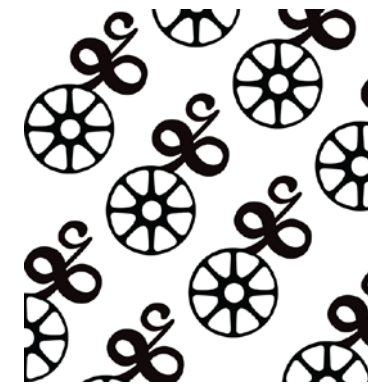
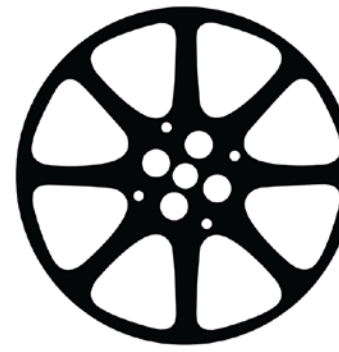
In my first iteration of patterns, I experimented with overlapping the curves of the lettermark. While the resulting patterns were interesting, they were not representative of Prasanna and his work.



FILM REEL PATTERNS

round 02: reworking the letterform

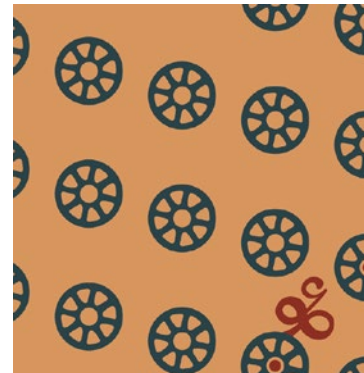
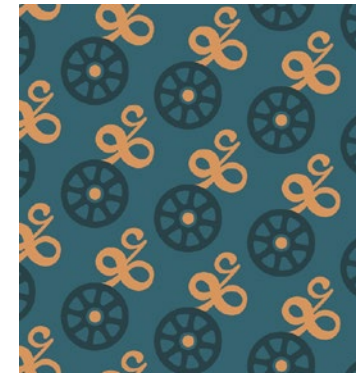
When looking back at my previous sketches, I realized I could make the original reel lettermark into a pattern. I reworked the visual so that the film reel would be the focal point and the lettermark would be the film coming out of it. The first draft focused on creating the visual, while the second adjusted the style. A dark blue background was chosen for it's subtle contrast and flexibility in use.



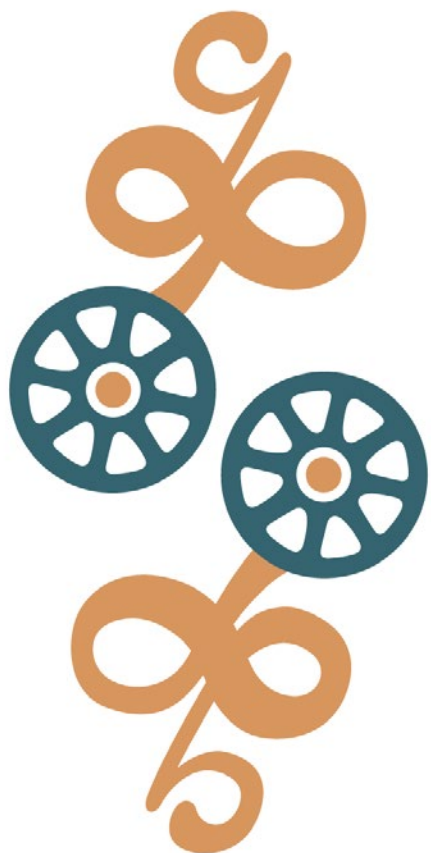
Draft of Film Reel



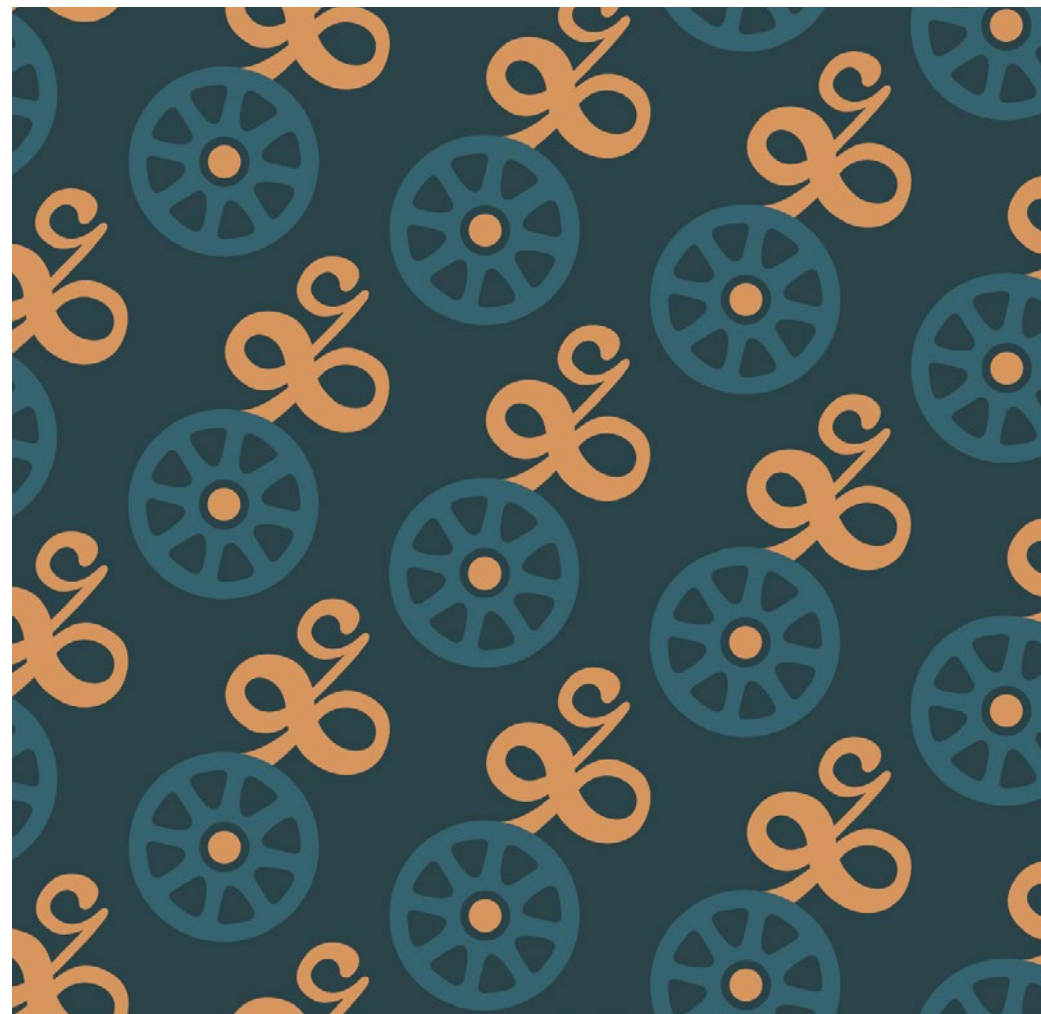
Revised Film Reel



Background Color Testing



additional
film motif



final pattern
with color

SECTION 05

DELIVERABLE

deliverable outline

research outline

drafting the layout

exploring
the world of

GOPI
PRASANNA



SUPER DELUXE

"Super Deluxe" (2020)

the importance of detail

The poster for Super Deluxe took Prasanna a year to illustrate. In his second collaboration with Thiagarajan Kumararaja, Prasanna wanted to make sure the poster captured the essence and complexity of the film. The intricate artwork and detail made the piece go viral, and it is considered one of the greatest posters in Tamil cinema.



Photo Credit: Gopi Prasanna's Twitter (@gopiprasanna)

final deliverable
and mockup

Festival Branding

Co-taught with tenure-track faculty Brooke Hull (bxh5541@psu.edu)

This project asked students to imagine and **brand a fictional day-long festival** of their choosing.

Each student developed a customized wordmark based on an existing typeface, paired it with a secondary text typeface, and built a system including a color palette and three icons.

The branding system was then applied across multiple deliverables: a 10-page booklet describing the event and its activities, an 18x24 poster advertising the festival, and a ticket for entry.

The assignment emphasized both **technical mastery and conceptual storytelling**. Students designed within modular and baseline grids, created consistent stylesheets, and balanced typographic clarity with expressive customization. At the same time, they considered audience, tone, and visual progression, ensuring their festival identity conveyed a sense of morning-to-night rhythm across the booklet. Through critiques and iteration, students explored how typography and design systems can create not only legibility but also atmosphere and cultural meaning.

Student 1

Project Summary

Students were tasked with imagining a day-long festival of their choosing. Once decided, students will name the festival, identify the target demographic, and describe the overall aesthetic vision of the event. With all these elements in mind, students will create a design system for their chosen festival. This system will include a customized wordmark and typeface pairing, a color palette, and 3 icons. Next, students will apply this system to a minimum 10-page booklet describing the event, a poster advertising the event, and a ticket for the event. Along with the booklet, students should design an 18x24 poster advertising the event, including at least 2 activities, and a ticket for entry.

Goals

The goals of this project was for students to learn how to create a comprehensive branding system and apply it to a hypothetical client. Students need to learn how to create uniformity within their system, but still allowing room for manipulation and creativity.

Project Write-Up

For my festival I really felt passionate about doing something with nature. This past summer I had the opportunity to visit two national parks in the Western portion of the United States and I was so moved by the beauty, so I wanted to pursue that in some way for my project. Being in the parks myself, I noticed the main demographic was families, so I chose that as my target audience. There would be many different group activities that are good for all ages, however most activities would be geared towards those who are a bit older since they would require strenuous activity. In terms of aesthetics it would definitely lean more towards the "granola" aesthetic meaning warmer tones, but also many greens, yellows, and warm blues; very natural colors.

I would also include many natural elements and shapes like mountains, trees, and plants. My personal style is definitely maximalist so I would love for the visual language of this festival to be very detailed. I feel this aesthetic will be a draw to families because it does not really limit the system to something too bold and scary, or too dainty and boring. The visual dynamism and complexities will be intriguing and feel adventurous. Additionally, a more maximalist style will better reflect the complexities of nature; I want to be able to reflect my theme within my designs as well as follow aesthetics.

Name Ideation

- Mountain Day
- Nurturing Nature
- Abounding Mountains
- Wonders of the World
- Harmony on the Horizon
- Nature's Adventures
- Peak Pursuit Day
- Exploration Day
- Parks and Peaks Day
- Outdoor Oasis Festival

I ended up pursuing the name “Parks and Peaks Day” for multiple reasons. The first reason being I felt that the alliteration made for a very fun and interesting name that could also be easily manipulated for my wordmark. Secondly, since my target audience is families, using simple words like “Parks” and “Peaks” would be very appealing and easy to understand for people of all ages. Thirdly, I intended to set the location of my hypothetical festival at Grand Teton National Park (where I visited in Summer 2024), which is known for its mountains (peaks).

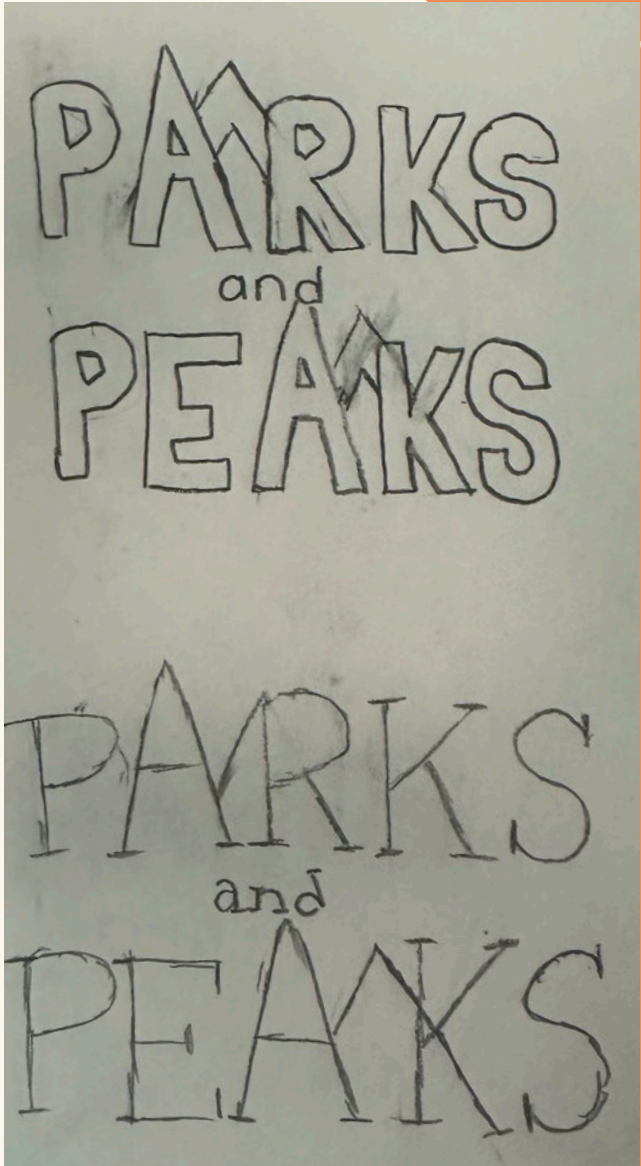
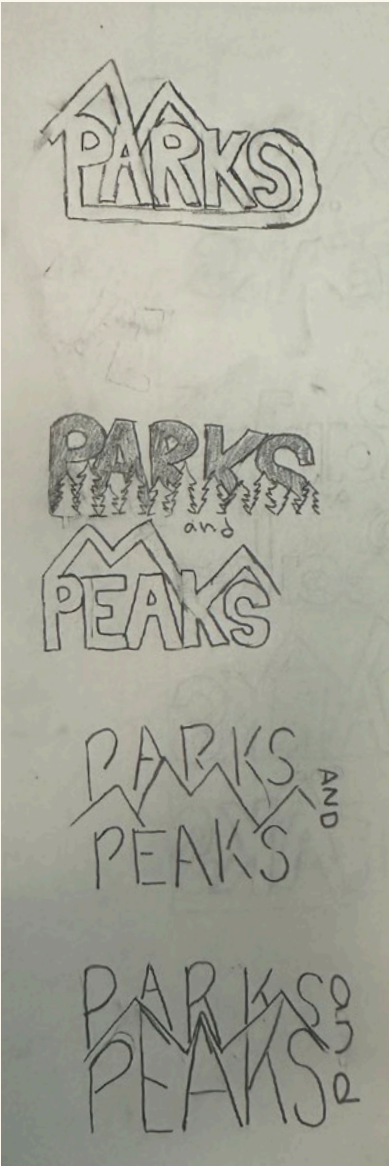
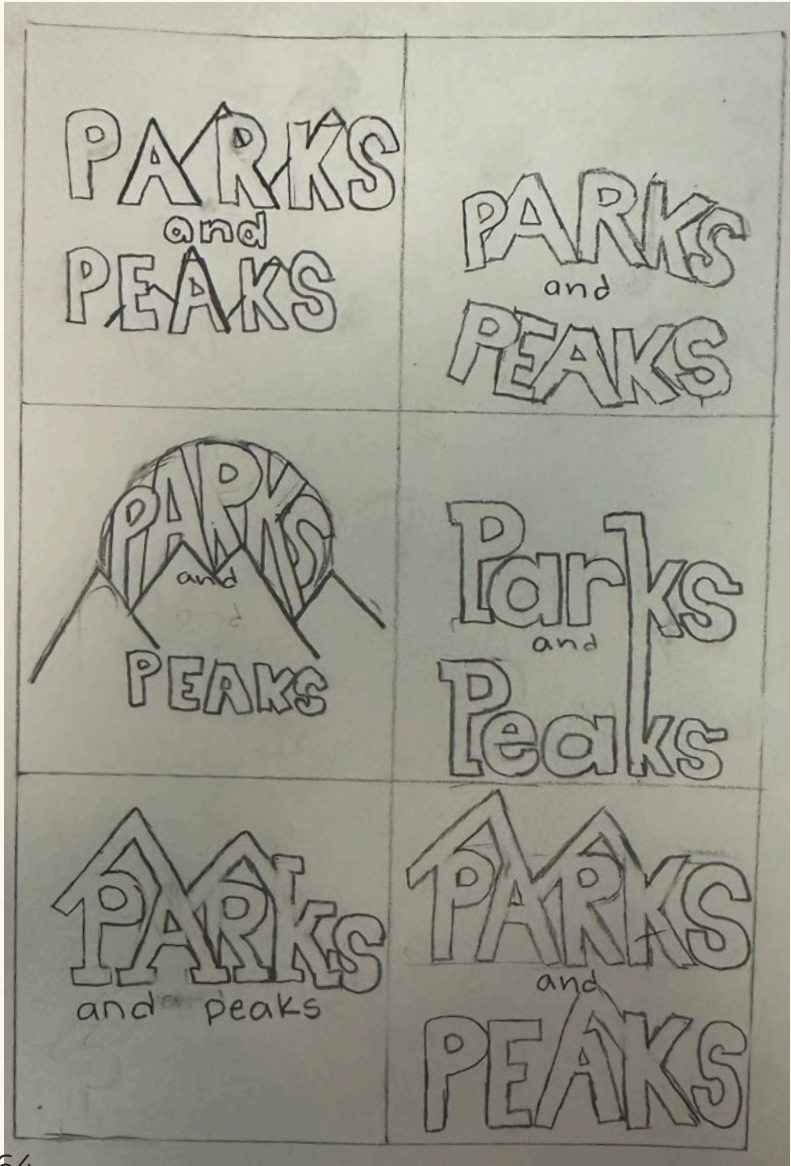
Mind Map



Using what I know about national parks and what I established in my project write-up, I created a mind map of key words and ideas that I could possibly use to help create my deliverables.

- Main Key Words:
- National Park
 - Mountains
 - Waterfalls
 - Rivers
 - Earthy
 - Wildlife
 - Adventure
 - Hiking
 - Natural Colors

Wordmark Sketching



Students were then tasked with creating a wordmark to represent their festival. This wordmark will be used on all deliverables. Going with “Parks and Peaks” for my festival name, provided a satisfying balance of letterforms since both “parks” and “peaks” contain five letters. Through this, I was able to easily align the words and create a balanced wordmark.

I knew I wanted to represent mountains in some fashion, due to how crucial they are to my festival. So, I played around with more illustrative wordmarks, but landed on a more simplified design using the natural “peaks” of the letterforms to manipulate into mountains.

Wordmark Digitized

Font Exploration

PARKS and PEAKS

PARKS and PEAKS

PARKS AND PEAKS

PARKS AND PEAKS

PARKS and PEAKS

PARKS and PEAKS

PARKS and PEAKS

PARKS AND PEAKS

PARKS and PEAKS

When it came to picking a font to use for my wordmark I noted the most common attributes of my sketches and aimed to find a font that would worked best. Generally, I noticed that slab serif fonts appeared most within my sketches; they give a nice weight to the wordmark and can be easily manipulated into a graphical element. Additionally, majority of the vintage national park graphics I used as references and inspiration, use a slab serif font! I picked the font that is first in the lineup and is called "BioRhyme" in the weight regular.

Wordmark Exploration

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AND
PEAKS

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Wordmark Final



5

4

1

2

3

PARKS
AND
PEAKS

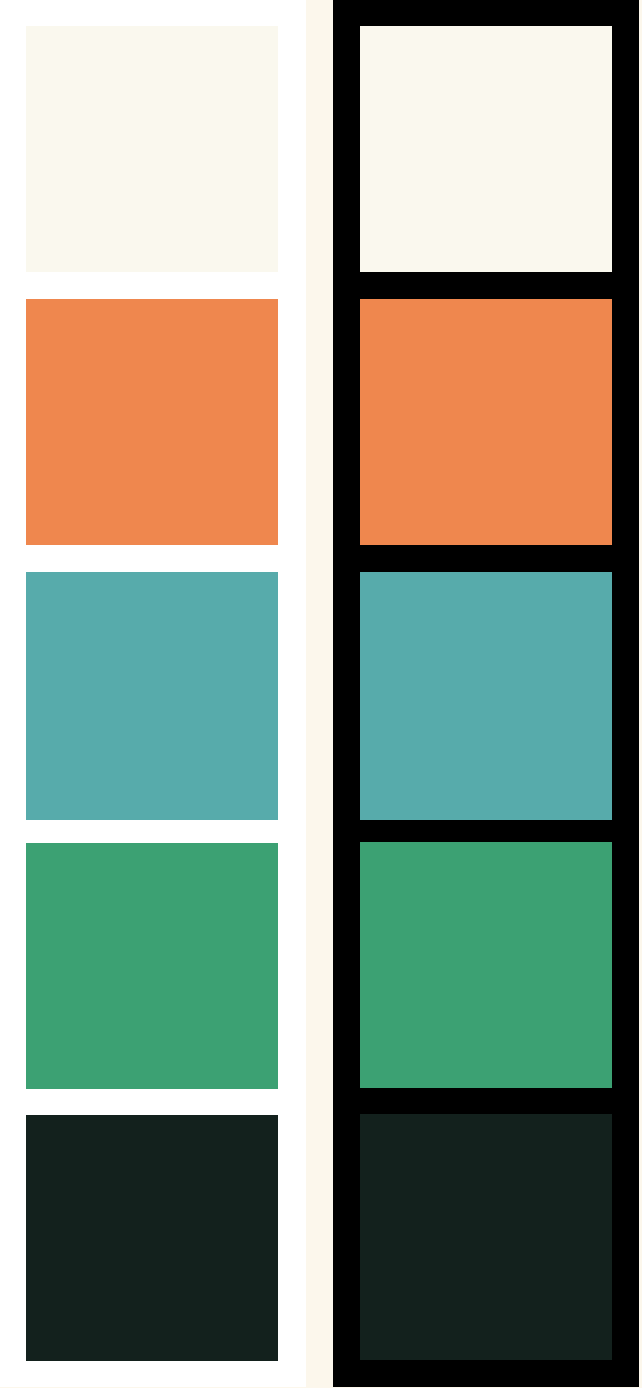
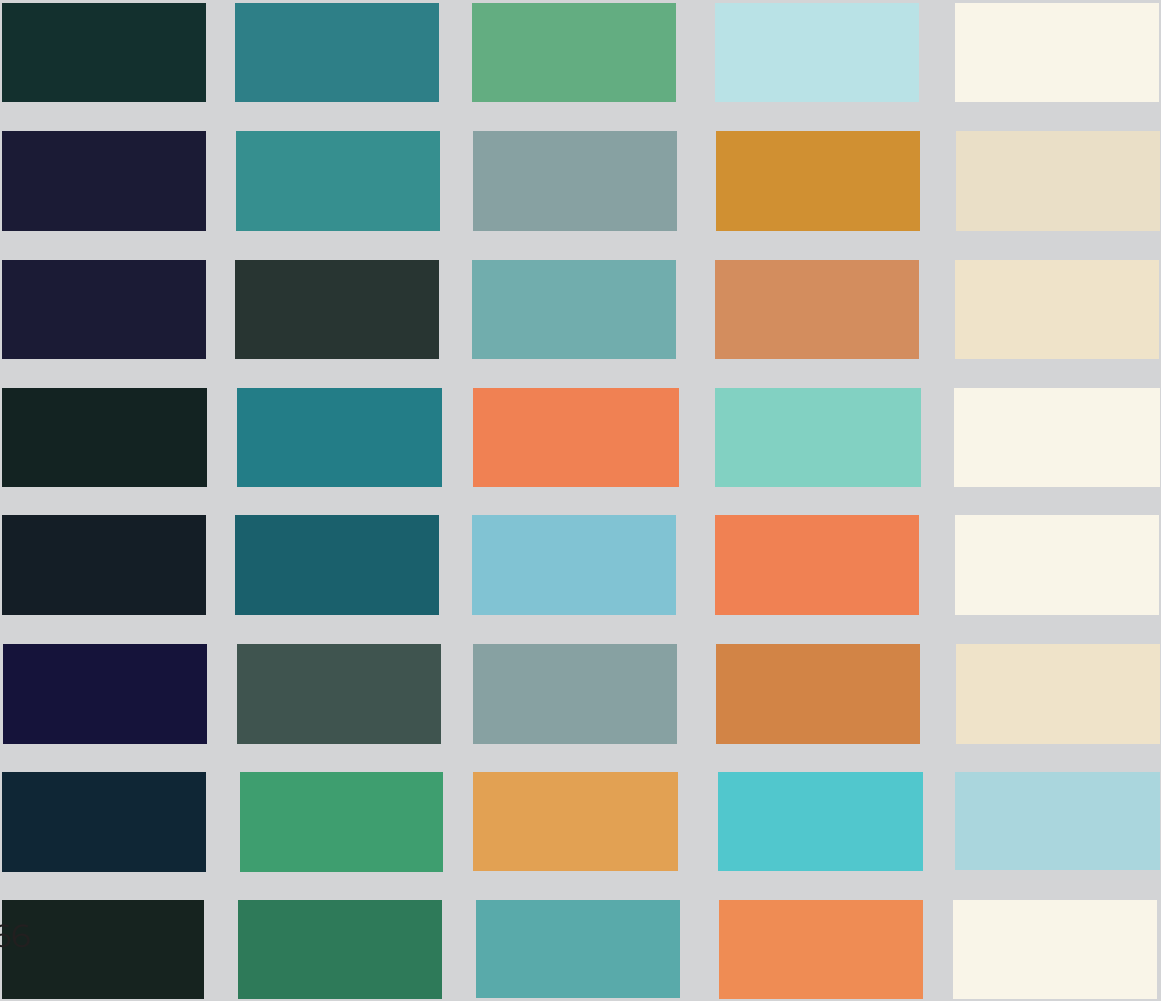
What's working?

- 1 All words/serifs are perfectly aligned left
- 2 Even amount of letters in name provides perfect left alignment
- 3 Consistent line weight is used in graphic element to create consistency
- 4 Consistent serif size/proportion in graphic element creates consistency
- 5 Letters in all align to cap height

Color Palette

When exploring my color palette, I knew I wanted to include orange and green due to the commonality of those colors within nature (trees, water, sky etc.) and National Park design as well. I then also noticed that many of the designs I took inspiration from included orange as well, so I added that to my palette for a pop of color.

Testing



I landed on this color palette because I knew I needed blue and green (colors commonly seen in nature), in addition to some colors commonly associated with National Parks (Cream and orange). This palette also passed the accessibility test in Adobe Color.

Icon Creation

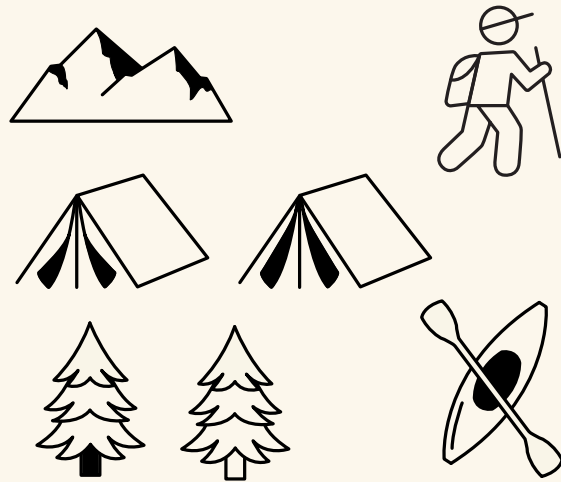
Students were tasked with creating a set of three icons to include in the various deliverables within their final submission.

All of the icons I created were ideas that originated from my mind map. I knew I wanted to display nature, but also aimed to display the various activities that my festival will have within it (canoeing, hiking, etc.)

Sketches



Digitized



Finalized



My final icons took on a more simplified style, but not so minimalistic that they would disconnect from my other deliverables. I used a thicker line weight so as to give a more playful feeling. Additionally, I added three diagonal lines to each icon to show motion and bring a consistent element throughout.



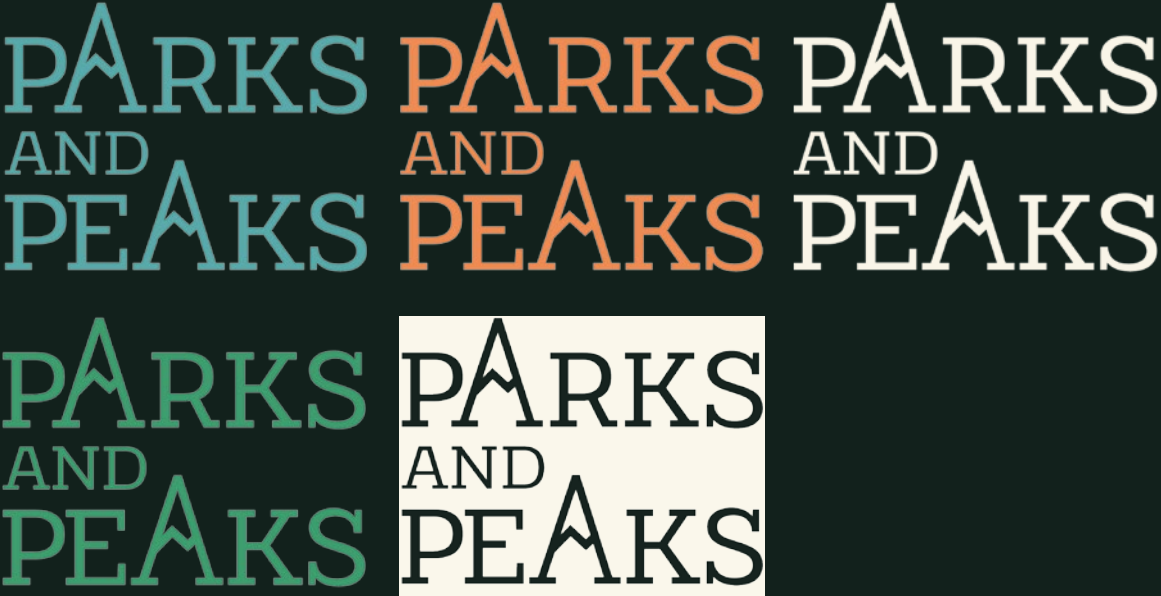
Coloring

To test the success of my icons and wordmark with my color palette, I ensured that each element could work in every color. This would also give me the flexibility to place any element on any background in my deliverables.

Icons



Wordmark

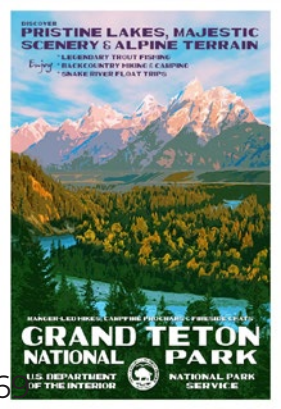
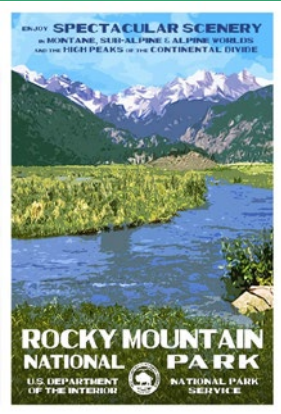


Poster Design

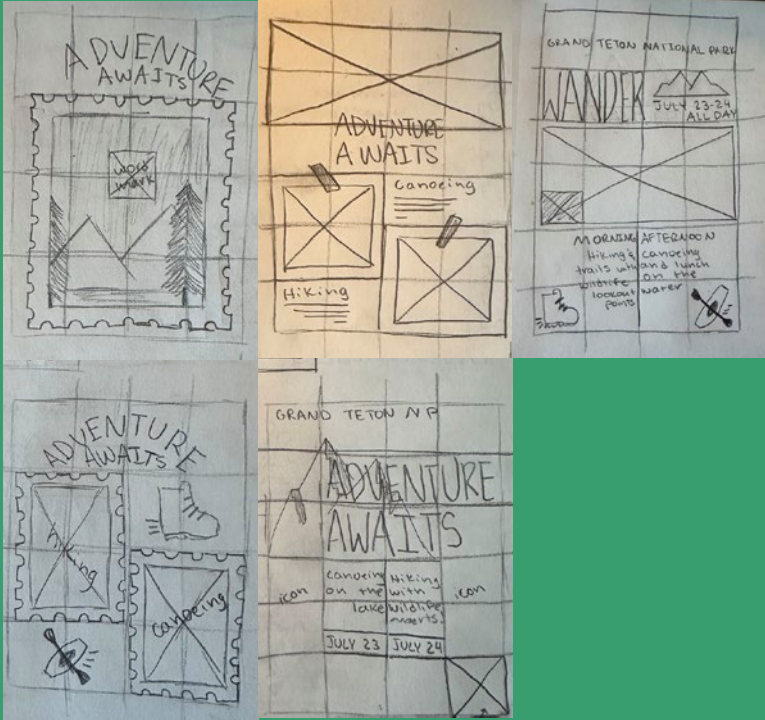
To advertise their day-long hypothetical festival, students were tasked with creating a poster to attract consumers. The design had to advertise two activities from the festival as well as give basic information.

For my design, I aimed to specifically replicate vintage National Park poster design. These designs typically are extremely illustrative and use illustration to frame the words and information.

Inspiration



Sketches



Design Process



Design (Critique)



Final PosterDesign

Critique Feedback

Overall, students felt that my design was very successful. My main critiques were to make the body copy bigger as it was too small to read. Additionally, I needed to specifically adjust the kerning of a few of my letters. Some of the contrast between the sky and the mountains also needed to be adjusted.

Feedback from professor pertained to minor alignment of my wordmark and ensuring comfortable negative space around my type.



- 1 Adjust the kerning between the A and the W (manually)
- 2 Align the wordmark to the rest of the type on the poster
- 3 Create a bit of better contrast between mountains and background

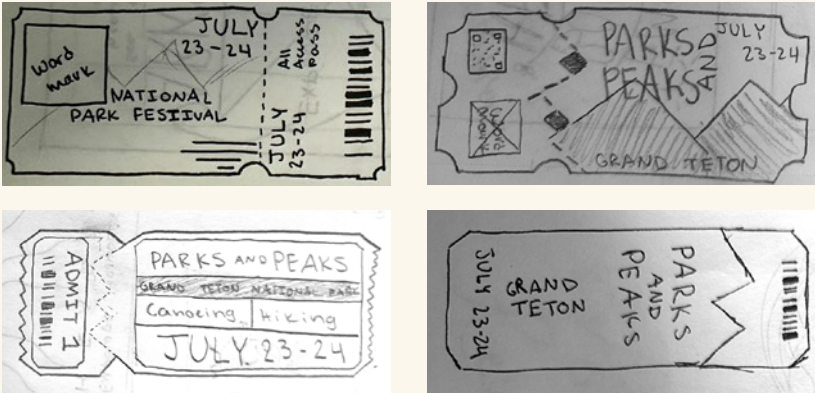


Ticket Design

Students were tasked with creating a ticket to pair with their poster and booklet.

There were no specifications as to what this ticket should include, but I felt that my ticket should include the aspect of a mountain as that has been a common theme within my work. Since my poster was aiming to represent vintage design, I took that for inspiration for my ticket as well.

Sketches



Ideation



Critique Design



My feedback was minor for the ticket design. My classmates noted that the type was hard to read in a few places and that I should also add angles to the center of the ticket. Students noted that they were pleased with the background and liked that the tear of the ticket made a mountain-scape.

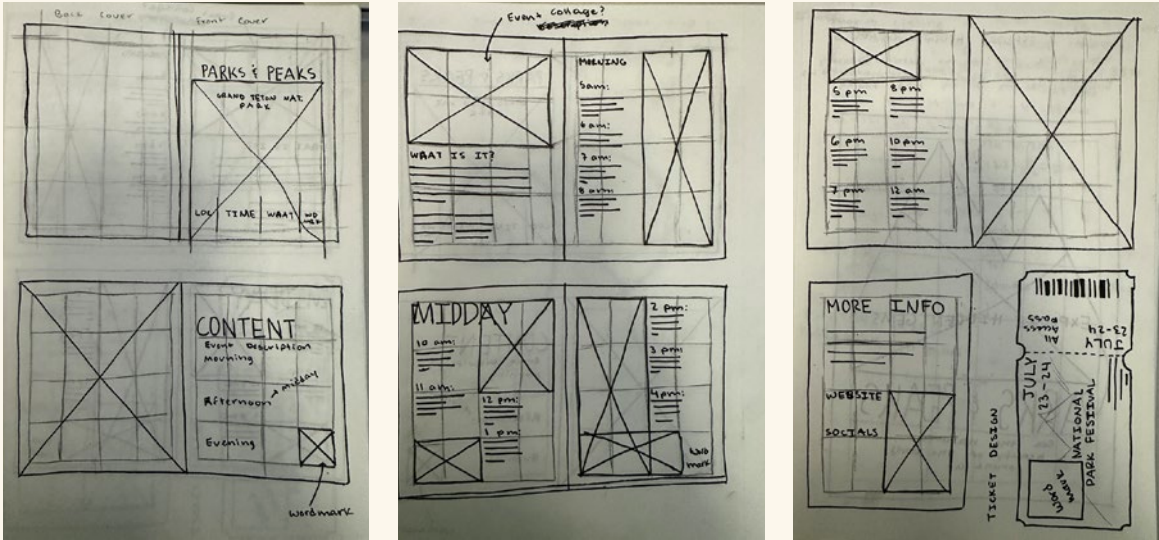
Final Design



Booklet Design

The main element of the project is a 10-12 page booklet. This booklet is to entail the entire day-long festival. Every activity of the festival is to be detailed and students were required to have at least 500 words throughout. There also must be a progression from morning to night.

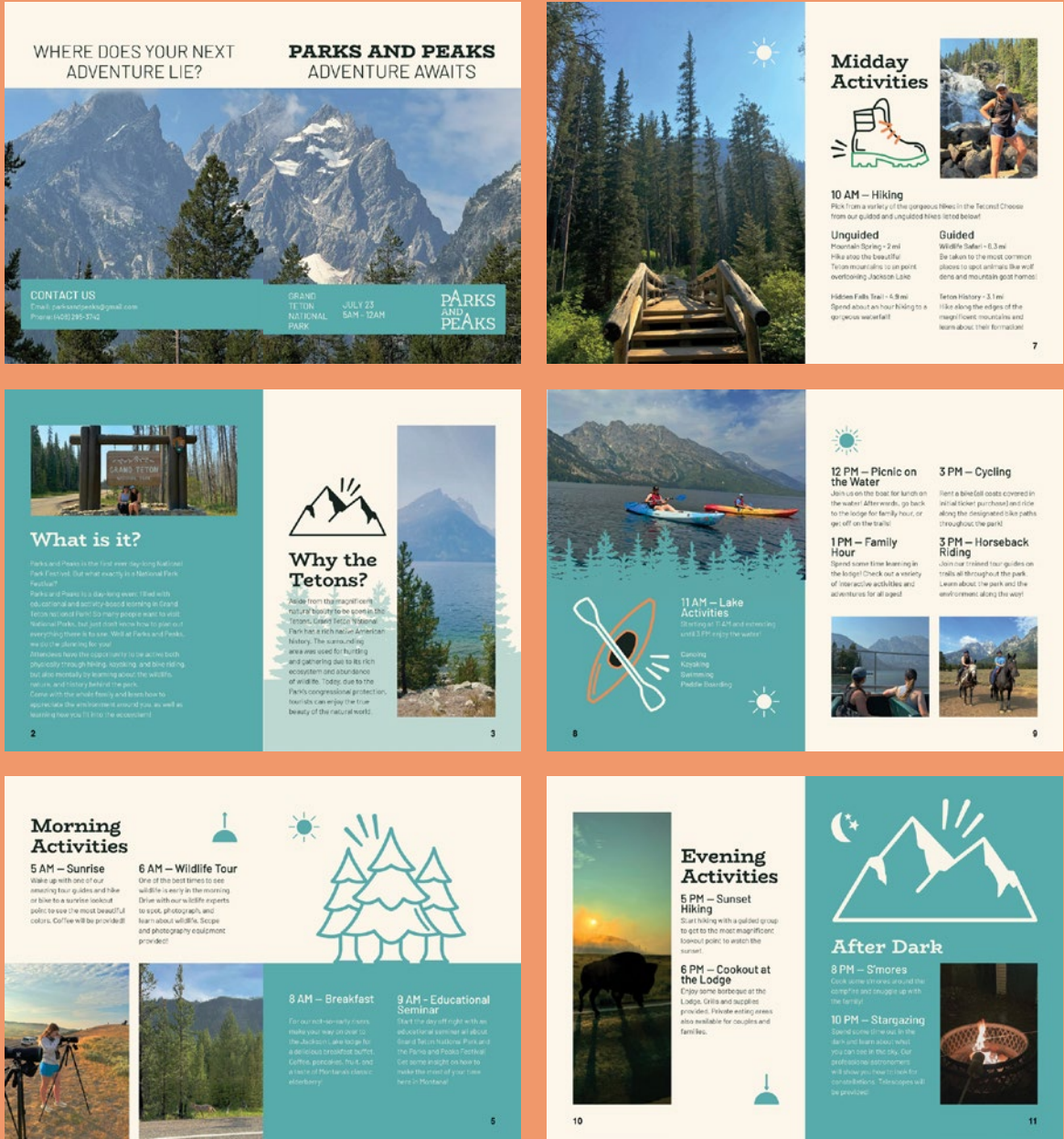
Sketches



I knew I wanted to make my booklet very image heavy since I have such a plethora of images, so I made sure to sketch with that in mind.

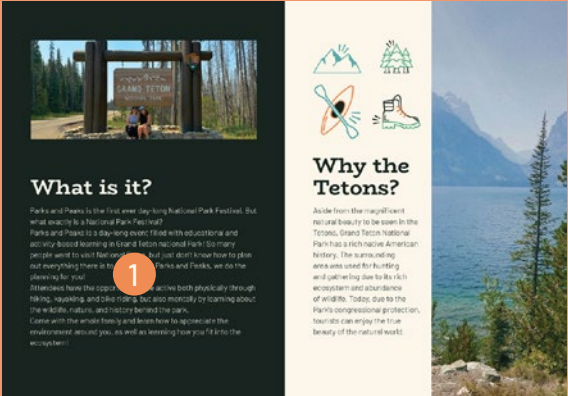
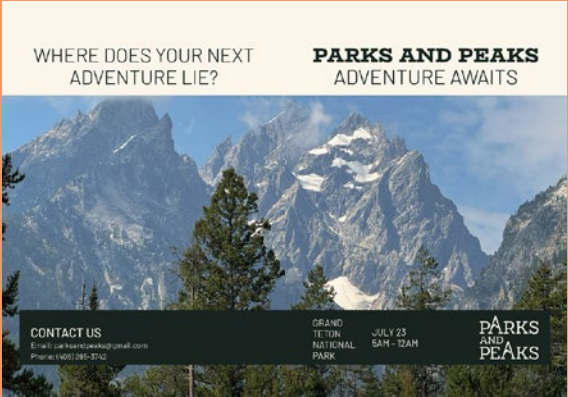
I had a hard time creating my booklet because I felt a little confined to my initial sketches. I also struggled a lot with the fact that my poster was so illustrative, but my booklet was so simple and it felt that there was a disconnect between the two with my first designs, so it took a lot of reworking.

Initial Design



Booklet (Critique)

Back Cover Front Cover



Critique Feedback

My feedback from peers mainly pertained to alignment and proper placement of typography and information. Students loved my use of photography and simply had minor refinements in that regard. My main feedback from my professor was regarding the use of my icons and how to ensure my image hierarchy remained strong.

- 1 Add paragraph breaks to define information
- 2 Make the sunrise more illustrated and easier to recognize
- 3 Use a colon instead of dash so as to not get confused with time stamps
- 4 Consider hierarchy of symbols and illustrated elements
- 5 Ensure contrast is strong enough/ think of more thoughtful placement of icons
- 6 Align elements in an intentional manner

The following pages contain my final booklet designs with the critiques I recieved applied.

Final Booklet Mockup

