

Honors in the Major

Fall 2024

School of Art, Art History and Design

BRANDING FOR IMPACT

Faith McPhillips

Fall 2024

Serina Sulentic

Abstract

Having grown up in 4-H from kindergarten through my senior year of high school, I experienced firsthand the impact of its programs learning skills such as community involvement, leadership, and innovation. This experience inspired me to research design issues in nonprofit branding. I applied the knowledge obtained from this research to produce a new brand for the 4-H non-profit corporation and also created objects and posters based on the new branding and messaging.

Initially, I researched the basics of 4-H and the barriers of its current branding techniques. I did this by pulling the demographics of those who participated in 4-H from the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. This allowed me to discover Iowa 4-H Youth Development Program statistics including students' age, location, and interest within clubs. Additionally, I asked my peers, classmates, and colleagues what they think the 4-H organization teaches students. This produced the theme of seeing 4-H as an organization that revolves around agriculture prompting me to consider the questions of why 4-H is being perceived heavily as a rural involvement and what visual elements could enhance audience engagement. Therefore, I applied the insights gained from this research to guide me through designing a series of four posters that showcase different programs 4-H offers. The four poster topics include stem, agriculture, service, and craft. Each poster highlights the content a member may learn regarding the subject matter, and additionally, the posters follow the 4-H branding guidelines which include instructions on using the 4-H name, applying the four-leaf clover emblem, and colors permitted to use in imagery or text. Along with these posters, I further wanted to expand my design skills by exploring materials I do not traditionally have the opportunity to work with.

Abstract Continued

To embark on this material exploration, I created a series of tangible objects that correlate with each of the topics. These objects include a 3D laser-cut hexagon, a 3D printed coaster, a stack of customizable index cards, and a sculpture made of laser-cut four-leaf clovers. Each of these objects provided me the opportunity to explore alternative methods to designing and creating objects. I was able to expand past my comfort zone ranging from the first time designing a file for a 3D print to precisely planning laser-cut pieces that could be fabricated into a functional object. This helped me understand that as a graphic designer to communicate messages and effectively resonate with an audience, I must embrace different approaches to thinking beyond traditional design forms. It's also crucial to be able to combine multiple elements such as research, branding, and material exploration to create an innovative solution for delivering the message you want the viewer to grasp.

Together, the posters and their correlating objects taught me about the process of rebranding while giving me the opportunity to experiment with different graphic design elements. I gained insights on aligning an organization's mission with visually compelling branding to enhance audience reach. The process increased my understanding of graphic design's role in rebranding and highlighted the impact that intentional, mission-driven visuals can have on audience engagement and perception. For the future, this is a good stepping stone into both branding and non-profit design as I was able to obtain skills in overcoming design challenges. I was able to effectively communicate visual identity and implement design elements that promote an organization's purpose.



CRAFT

4-H crafts include a variety of hands-on activities that involve making things. Students learn a range of expertises through arts and crafts projects such as fine motor skills, decision making, and innovation.



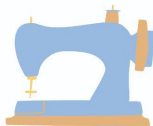
Photography

Students learn about different principles of photography such as lighting, focus, and perspective.



Wood Working

Students learn about material properties, tool safety, measuring, and functional design.



Sewing and Textiles

Students learn about fiber properties, techniques, pattern reading, and upcycling.



SERVICE

4-H teaches skills like teamwork, critical thinking, and compassion while participating in service projects that give back to the community.



Leadership

- Plan Club Activities
- Club Officer Positions
- Young Mentorship
- Teaching Workshops
- Presenting Projects
- Cloverbud Teacher

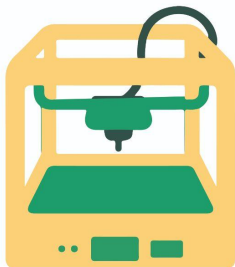
Service Projects

- Host Resource Drives
- Neighborhood Cleanup
- Visit Nursing Homes
- Make Care Packages
- Send Holiday Cards
- Fundraising Events



STEM

4-H programs use hands-on activities in robotics, computer science, and electrical engineering to teach problem solving, creative and critical thinking, and to inspire kids to explore engineering and technology.



Programs Include:

- Robotics
- Aerospace
- Computer Science
- Financial Literacy
- Entrepreneurship
- Physics
- Chemistry

4-H STEM Challenge

The 4-H STEM challenge is an annual kit-based learning program that aims to inspire young people to learn about science, technology, engineering, and math.

How It Works:

Each year's challenge focuses on a different topic area of interest to youth and it includes a kit with activities that help youth learn about the subject area.



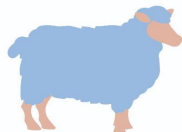
AGRICULTURE

4-H members learn about the importance of sustainability, food production, and environmental responsibilities. This helps them learn about the process behind the food they consume daily while also educating them on the land and its resources.



Plant Science

- Soil Science and Health
- Gardening and Horticulture
- Environmental Stewardship
- Sustainable Practices



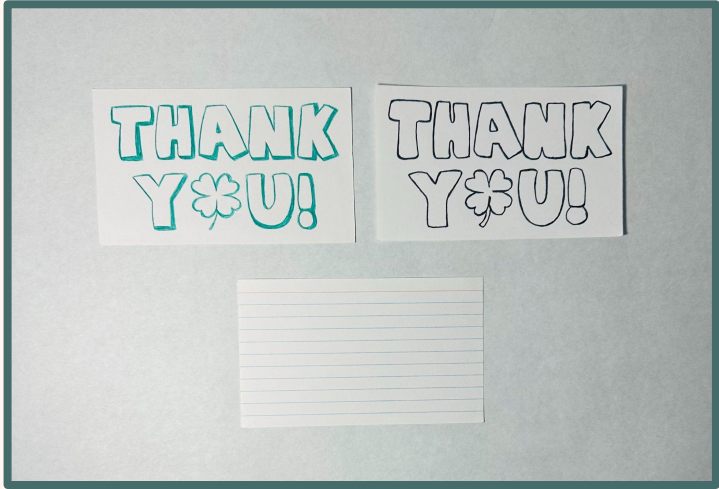
Animal Science

- Animal Care
- Livestock Management
- Animal Nutrition
- Reproduction



Food Science

- Food Production and Processing
- Food Safety and Preservation
- Understanding Supply Chains
- Learning Food Systems



26 Undelivered
Letters

Abstract:

26 Undelivered Letters is a collection of images, objects, and letters compiled into the form of a photo book. Rather than attempt to combine disparate elements in a digital-publishing workspace, all pieces in this project are treated as objects photographed against a backdrop. My research primarily consisted of methods to harmonize these objects and sequence them into a compelling and cohesive photo book with a sustained narrative of grief and loss throughout.

The contents of the photobook fall into three categories, all surrounding and informing a personal tragedy that I experienced in May: prints of photographs taken in the summer months, letters penned in the same period, and a variety of artifacts from the months leading up to the summer. In a sense, these materials were determined for me. I wrote and photographed during the summer out of necessity, not artistry. My research for 26 Undelivered Letters dealt with the form and presentation of these materials. The form I settled into is heavily indebted to Dieter Roth's *246 Little Clouds* (1968) – the book's hand-drawn materials are photographed with direct light and hard shadows, emphasizing their tactility. I transcribed all the letters I'd written into a notebook I was willing to cut pages from and elected to write in cursive to emphasize their intimate nature as personal letters. Following this, I began printing the photographs from the summer. Since I knew I wanted to reproduce the letters at-scale in the photobook, I chose to print the photographs five inches wide, a size I felt would fit comfortably on the pages of the final photobook. I made several test strips to ensure image fidelity on the thin, textured paper. Photographs were printed eight at a time and cut by hand into individual frames. I then selected the artifacts I intended to include and photographed all the assembled materials individually under hard light on a pearl background.

Abstract:

The bulk of this project was then spent sequencing these images for the final photobook. The only definitive rule I gave myself for this sequence was that the letters must appear chronologically. At times, the sequence I eventually settled on referentially connects photographs to their accompanying letters – elsewhere, the connection is purely aesthetic or poetic. Finally, I sent the finished sequence for a test print – upon receiving it, I made minor adjustments to the tone of the images and moved a few pages to better positions. The final sequence was then sent back to the printer for the full, hardcover book.

The primary difficulties in making this piece were emotional. The tragedy I experienced took the most important person in my life – even now I am still lost in the grief of their passing. Transcribing the letters, printing the images, and sequencing were incredibly difficult due to the attention they demanded I pay to a history I would at times rather pretend not exist. Nonetheless I learned a great deal in the technicalities of this object-based photobook, from printing to lighting to sequencing. This project is a solid foundation for further experiments I may pursue.

Interior Pages:



June 22, 2024 - 7:00 PM

Valentine,

The past few days have been difficult - I've been sitting in front of pages trying to get some thoughts down. It's so many things I'd like to tell you in person, so many things about you, about us. I'd like to tell you things. But I've only my perspective, my experience of of these past weeks - here and right now: miss you feels utterly trivial. The days spending this past month trying to follow every contour of every moment I have with you, both the painful and the happy: I feel so much fear and sadness that I cannot remember every insane moment, and despite that I feel a traumatic impulse to forget and clip off much of what happened. A quiet feeling. I've been walking on the beaches at low tide, gazing at the tide pools. There are so many crabs, so many seashells - I think ~~you~~ you would love them. I'm wandering in the woods lots in the afternoons - mostly taking photos of bird houses, yes, yes, but quiet and beautiful still hearing you in the mind.

Love,
Ashanti

Interior Pages:



26 Undelivered
letters

218

PORCELAIN SLIP BURNOUT: DRYER SHEET REVIVAL

Mileah Mesch
Fall 2024
Andrew Casto

ABSTRACT

Porcelain slip burnout is achieved by coating an object or material in slip and firing it in a kiln—typically the chosen material is something organic like cardboard or cotton since it will burn out and create fumes. For my honors project, I use this burnout process with dryer sheets in order to create a piece that highlights the translucent properties of porcelain slip and versatility that comes with working with a fabric-like material turned ceramic.

My approach to working with dryer sheets began by experimenting with different thicknesses of slip coatings on the sheets to create enough strength where they could be handled after firing. I found a once-fire method to $\Delta 6$ (2232° F) was the most effective for creating strong enough pieces. While they are still fragile and require a gentle touch, I was surprised to find how thin I could get the sheets and how well they kept their structure when manipulated while still wet. From there, I was able to experiment with shaping the dryer sheets in a variety of ways including using a technique similar to paper-mache over different molds and folding semi-dry coated sheets into origami shapes.

ABSTRACT

The vessels made with the paper mache method were very thin and translucent and inspired the creation of a lampshade. However I did not create a thick enough coating to hold its structure, so in the kiln, it collapsed into a flatter cloud shape. The origami tests were the most exciting results for me. After creating many smaller cranes, I sewed together several dryer sheets to create a large crane. There were challenges initially keeping the structure strong enough after firing, but I solved this by painting on extra slip after it's folded and by supporting the origami structure with bricks.

This project has been a fun learning experience and has taken me further than I expected to go with the process. I had dreamt of creating ceramic origami that feels like paper for over a year now, but didn't think it was possible. As I got more comfortable with using the dryer sheets, the possibilities seemed endless, and I feel so satisfied by the results.

'PAPER MACHE'



ORIGAMI CRANES



← FIRST SMALL
SUCCESS

FIRST XL CRANE →
**FIRED W/O
KILN SUPPORTS



← FINAL XL CRANE
**FIRED W/
KILN SUPPORTS

FINAL INSTALLATION





TALAVERA: FUNCTION & AESTHETICS



Mya Cermak
Fall 2024
Andrew Casto

Abstract:

Talavera, a type of majolica pottery native to the Puebla region in Mexico, is distinguished by their natural red-fired clay with a white glaze base, and strong colorful decorations. Bisqueware is coated with yellow-tinted slip and hand-painted with thick pigments, achieving its distinctive style after a final firing. My honors project explored the Talavera process and aesthetics to create a personal interpretation that maintains cultural authenticity.

I made a set of containers accompanied with a wall tile to hang above the set. To start, I formulated a low-fire terracotta clay body, designed to achieve a warm, rich rust-orange color typical of terracotta, with Newman Red clay as the primary material. Then I made a series of blue, green, and red colored overglazes by adding colorants or masonstains to the studio's underglazes. The blue holds a cobalt carbonate compound to achieve that classic rich blue for decoration. First part of the project was to build my structures. I extruded and handbuilt the three vases into hexagonal prisms. After bisque firing the pieces, I dipped them in a tin-based slip, which should have resulted in a white background after firing. However, in my project, the slip burned out unevenly, blending with the clay body. Talavera can be completed using other colors like red, yellow, green, and black. My project uses green, red, and black but all colors washed out and came out with warm hues.



Abstract:

Traditional Talavera designs are often intricate and ornamental, featuring motifs like flowers, geometry, scrolls, and radial strokes, typically approved by the studio owner. For my project, I embraced a more dynamic, gestural style, incorporating flowers and freehand patterns. The pieces are painted with mule hair brushes, cut to have the center hairs much longer than the surrounding outer hairs. Similar to the function and use of a fountain pen. I cut a regular paint brush to achieve this type of tool. A final firing takes place at cone 06 oxidation which is approximately 1828°F in a gas kiln. Unfortunately the pieces created were placed in a cone 6 fire, resulting in a different finish. It was with luck that the glazes did not melt and instead created a fascinating effect where the glossy designs are lifted from the matte background. Creating a scorched worn effect that I personally find alluring. When the Talavera Symposium took place, I was able to witness and learn more about talavera, correct my mistakes, and have the opportunity to create a tile that uses the rightly measured materials.

Talavera is a cherished technique that has a long history stemming from Spain and Moorish culture. The art form involves tedious practice that is accompanied with many regulations and standards. Primarily produced for commercial use, Talavera often limits artists' creative freedom. During our Talavera Symposium, I had the privilege of learning directly from master Talavera artisans, observing their techniques and participating in demonstrations. While my surface treatment for my pieces came out different than expected, I appreciate its uniqueness and efforts. In future endeavors, I aim to integrate this craft into educational curriculums, providing students with culturally sustaining lessons on Talavera and other global art forms.





CRACKLE FOIL

FRACTURING HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS

FALL 2024

BY ANNA MILLER

ADVISOR HEATHER PARRISH

HONORS ABSTRACT

My Honors Research Project delves into the history of printmaking at the University of Iowa, highlighting some of the foil techniques discovered by Virginia A Myers. While emphasizing the crackle foil technique she used on paper, the elements of this research will question and break down parts of self that society has imposed, allowing us to embody a new understanding of our character.

I began my research by reading Virginia A Myers' books, "*Foil Imaging: A New Art Form*" and "*Changing Light: A New Visual Language*". Here I discovered a technique that uses ML200 adhesive on both sides of paper, Dutch mordant acid, and silver foil on the top 5 layers, then exposed to acid at 10-minute increments. Today Western art, the sustainability standard has changed people's practices. Considering this, I decided to experiment with our current alternatives and started tests with different papers, foils, adhesives and acids. My first set of trials used paper with gac100, overlay varnish, 7 layers of foil, and ferric acid. I checked these every 10 minutes to see the degradation of the foils. To my delight, there was quite a change within the material. The acid ate away faster at the gac100 than the overlay varnish, making me consider block-out qualities when soaking the paper in acid. The ferric works much quicker than the Dutch making developing the image harder to control. Although the results may be more consistent within the traditional Dutch mordant, the toxicity level and harm it does to the body and environment inspires an urge to use ferric that is safer. My second trial was layering red, gold, blue, and a nude foil on top, where the acid ate through the top nude color immediately, indicating I needed to use several layers of this foil.



The image features a vertical strip on the left side with a layered, textured appearance. The top layer is white with small red and blue speckles. Below it is a yellowish-gold layer, and the bottom layer is a dark brown or reddish-brown with similar speckling. The main background is a light, textured surface with faint, ghostly text in a reddish-pink hue, including phrases like "lity on a woman upon whom an abortion is", "at", "of medicine shall adopt rules", "minister this section.", "TIVE DATE. This Act, being deemed of immediate", "effect upon enactment.", "cy", "reasonable medical judgment", and "For the purposes of Code chapter 146B, unless", "ed, 'medical emergency' means a situation", "ion is performed to preserve the life of".

ABSTRACT CONCLUSION

Looking at the results of this research confirmed my ideas of cracking the antiquity of traditions and reconsidering more sustainable notions, by showing I could achieve the same results with safer materials. My final piece concludes with a copy of the “HEART BEAT BILL,” passed in Iowa this past year. The combination of the crackle foil technique and overlay varnish as a stop-out, allowed me to capture the essence of Virginia’s work with foil by illuminating women’s rights and shedding light on the laws that have restricted women’s health care in Iowa. As restrictive laws continue to happen around the USA, this project serves as a conduit for reconsidering and fracture the traditions within our legislation.



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35 section 146B.1, or



Congratulations on
An outstanding
Honors in the Major
show!